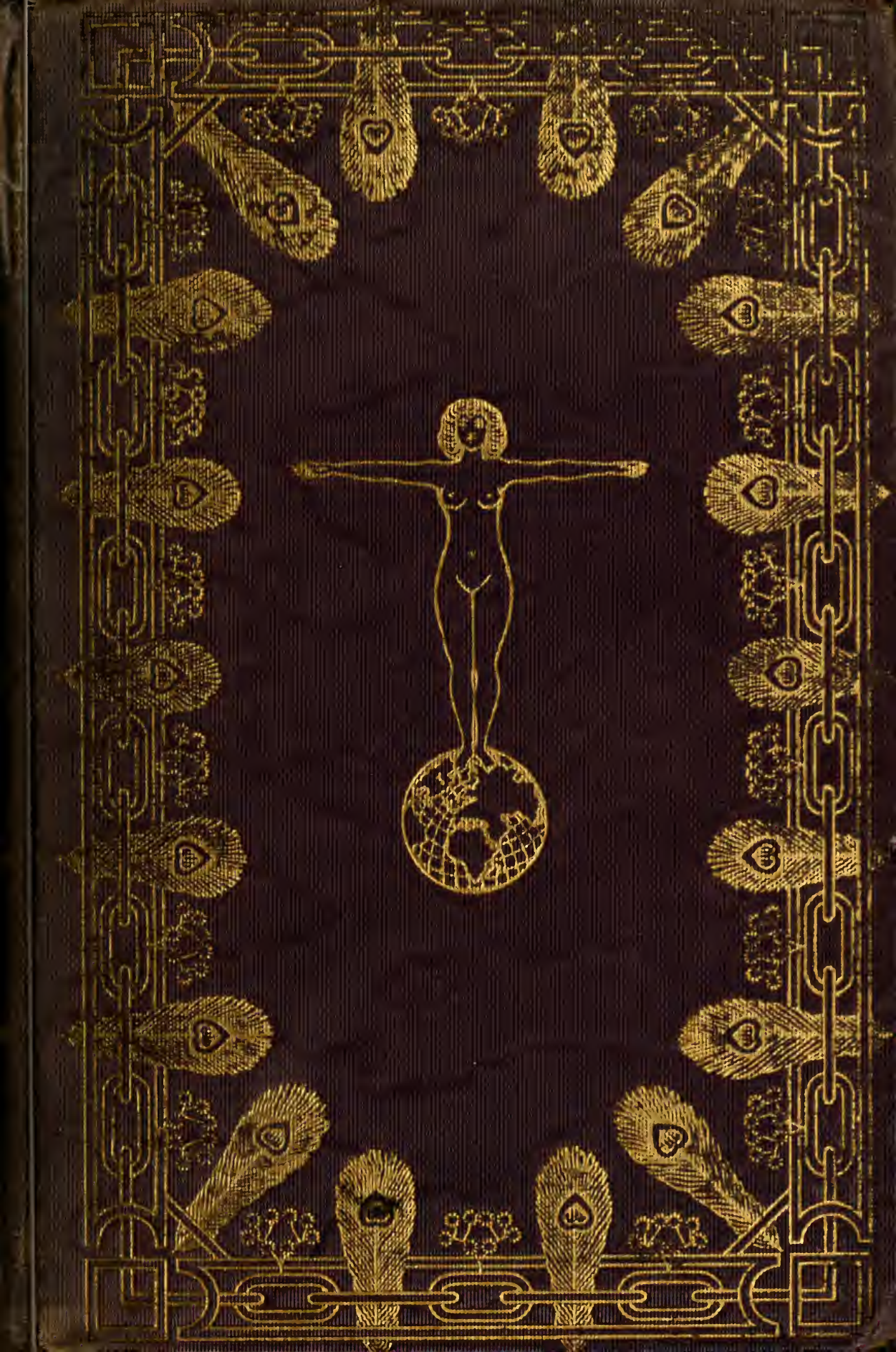

TEUTONIC WOMEN IN THE TIME OF THE HUNS

After the painting by O. Guillonet.

WOMAN

In all ages and in all countries

WOMEN OF THE TEUTONIC NATIONS

by

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Dedicated to

MADAME CHRISTIAN HEURICH

NÉE KEYSER

PREFACE

ADEQUATELY to write the history of the woman of any race would mean the writing of the history of the nation itself. There is no phase of the cultural life of any people that is not founded upon the physical and moral nature of its women. On the other hand, mental and moral heredity, both through paternity and maternity, determines the character and innermost being of woman. If we knew all the preponderating influences of heredity for ages, we could with almost mathematical accuracy compute the traits of human biology in every case. The forces of environment, tremendous though they are, modify, but do not alter in any way the original nature of man, which is established and standardized "by eternal and immutable laws." Anthropology is continuously progressing toward a firm scientific foundation, and is beginning to organize even the vast domain of psychology into a well-defined system. The interdependence between physical, mental, and moral traits is well recognized, but its exact determination is impossible, owing to the infinite complexity of the endless ancestral potencies.

So much is established, however: Teutonic woman, as she appears in history, is the product of two groups of influences,—the one group, inherited nature; the other, environment; she is the exact sum of these antecedent causes. And only so far as these causes differ does the

Teutonic woman differ from her sister of any other race of other times and climes.

In this book of a purely historical, literary, and cultural character must be excluded all that refers to the physiological and ethnographical characteristics of the Teutonic woman and of her Slavic sister. Nor are we concerned with the theory of their evolution, *i. e.*, the search of the physical principles according to which the consequences of their existence are true to the laws of their antecedents. Many eminent scientists have tried their great faculties on this subject of universal interest and importance. Standard works of a scientific character, like Ploss's *Das Weib in der Natur-und Völkerkunde,* abound in scientific and medical bibliography.

Our limited task is merely to deal succinctly with the most general evolution of the social position and the cultural status of the Teutonic and, even more briefly, of the Slavic woman at the various epochs of their respective histories, and how far the history of civilization among those races was influenced by them, how far the symptoms of national morality and the degree of culture were shaped by feminine achievements, proclivities, virtues, and vices. Two thousand years of the richest, almost unfathomable, history had to be traversed in the attempt to glean the essential red thread from the enormous masses of facts which in their entirety would be inaccessible even to the most universal historical scholar. Most difficult of all the periods is perhaps the question of the present and actual women's movement, which is now in its liveliest flux and in a most variable condition both in the German and in the Slavic world. It is impossible as yet to systematize the entirety of the problems and the requirements which have resulted in recent times from the transformation of society with regard to the position of woman among the two modern

peoples. Many of the questions belong to the domain of private and public law, of political economy, of sociology, of education in all its phases. The leaders of state and church and society, the higher schools and universities, are signally undecided concerning the final solution, though the mist of the conflict of opinion begins slowly to clear away. Even under the changed conditions of modern society, one party still clings to the old tradition of the family ideal of wifehood and motherhood, which is no longer possible in all cases, as of yore, and considers extra-domestic activity as abnormal, unhealthy, transient; the other extremists desire to wipe out the natural differences and the limitations prescribed by sex to human activity and capacity. A middle ground and a rational solution will certainly be found during this century.

The author has strenuously endeavored to avail himself for every period of all the source material and the secondary works accessible to him in the Library of Congress and in the other libraries of the national capital. The chapters on the Reformation Period, the Era of Desolation, and on Woman Held in Tightening Bonds,—a long period of dreariness so distressing and humiliating to German pride,—were prepared with skill and scholarship by Miss Sarah H. Porter, A. M., at the time a graduate student in the author's department. Credit for the chapter on Russian Woman belongs to Mr. Alexis V. Babine, of the Library of Congress.

The author also expresses sincere gratitude to the publishers, and especially to Mr. J. A. Burgan, the publishers' editor, for his careful revision of the English text and for the generous, vigilant aid extended to the author throughout the entire work.

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Chapter I

The Women of the Pagan Teutons

I

THE WOMEN OF THE PAGAN TEUTONS

WOMEN were valued by the primeval Teutonic race, as by all other races of the human family, as mere chattels—means whereby the profit or the pleasure of man might be maintained or increased. The custom of burning the wife or wives with the dead master and husband was, from the prehistoric times until far into the light of historic days, prevalent in the tribes of the Teutonic family. Sacrifices of widows were especially prescribed in eastern Germanic law, and the low status of woman among the Teutons of the early times is sufficiently indicated by the established and quasi-legalized right and prerogative of the husband, as the owner of the female chattel, to bequeath, give, sell, or hire her person or services to strangers, guests, or friends; or even to kill her if she committed adultery, or if want and distress made such a course expedient.

We must admit the harshness and cruelty to which woman, according to the most ancient conscience of the Teutonic race, could lawfully be subjected. Evidences that her status was outside of the pale of right and law is manifest in all historical proofs. Traces of the old status still abound. One lies in the present refinement of woman's actual position—a refinement which cannot obscure its real origin from the student of culture and civilization.

It is certain that the prehistoric Germanic community began with the communal use of women for pleasure or profit. This common use could be broken and suppressed only by marriage by capture. If the man wished to have *exclusive* possession of a wife, he had to procure her from outside his own community. Besides this exogamic marriage, an endogamic marriage was later recognized as conferring title, on the condition that the man reconciled the woman's blood relatives by the payment of a definite compensation. This system of marriage by capture survived the Migration period, and was found in Sweden even in the early Middle Ages.

Marriage by treaty also existed even in prehistoric times. This compact (*Gifta*) is always between the blood relatives of the bride and the bridegroom. It is a presentation, a giving away (*Verschenkung*) of the bride. The parent or guardian gives her away, an act which requires no consent of the bride, but only a counter gift, or rather purchase money, from the bridegroom. Thus a kind of purchase, the symbolic pursuit of the bride (*Brautlauf*) as an imitation of the ancient marriage by capture, and the technical consummation of marriage (*Beilager*), for which the man, however, owes her a gift (*Morgengabe*), are the phases of marriage.

Polygamy is the rule at first. The northern Teutons, especially the Scandinavians, practised an unmitigated polygamy down to a very late period, and only yielded after a most persistent struggle with the ethics of Christianity. As late as the eighth century the bitter accusations of the churchmen against Pepin of Heristal for having two wives, and their arraignment of Charlemagne's sins of concupiscence, show how ineradicable this ancient Teutonic usage was. However, as early as B.C. 57, Cæsar mentions King Ariovistus's marriage to two wives

as an exception to Teutonic custom, due, perhaps, to political motives. Tacitus praises the Germans as those who, with few exceptions, live in monogamy, and though Tacitus is not an unimpeachable authority, owing to the fact that he wished to idealize the vigorous race as a model to the decadent Roman world of his time, his statements seem to prove that at the dawn of Christianity southern and western German tribes at least had the highest conception of family purity. Later on, under the teachings of Christianity, polygamy was first modified, then abolished; and marriage by capture was either suppressed or treated as a crime.

Upon the status of women among the Teutonic tribes the study of philology sheds some light. From it we learn that the Gothic *quinô,* woman (in general), and *quêne,* married woman, signifies the child-bearing one, from the verb *quinan, gignere;* or *wîp* (Saxon *wîf,* Old Norse *vîf*), indicating the root of *wib,* motion,—the mobile being; though *frouwa, frau* (Old Norse, *freyja*), means originally "joyous (*froh*), mild, gracious," and is used to signify "illustrious ladies" down to the thirteenth century.

The female child was allowed to live only by grace of the father. If this right of the father over the life of his female child appears barbarous, we must understand that the valuation of life in primitive times is always very low. Not only among the early Teutons, but also among the early Romans and Slavs, a custom prevailed by which the children might kill their old or incurably sick parents, because of the conception that life is valuable only so long as physical vigor dwells in the body. Believing this, it is easy to conclude that when vigor departed death was a blessing, the bestowal of which parents could legitimately expect from their children.

The daughter was bought from the father for marriage purposes for a value, and, without recourse, she was placed in the absolute possession of the buyer, who might be an entire stranger to her. Friendship, favor, or material advantage might induce the buyer to transfer his wife to whomsoever he chose. Nothing was left to her but resignation, and, obeying a stern necessity, she followed her husband and taskmaster to death, "not to sweeten his after-life, but to continue her dreary service."

The Norse sources are full of tragic examples of immolation. When the bright sun god Baldur, the wisest, most eloquent, and mildest of all the Ases, is finally slain, at the instigation of the evil god Loki, by a twig of mistletoe in the hands of the blind god Hödur, his wife, the goddess Nanna, is burned with him. Likewise, the Valkyrie Brunhild, in the Old Norse version of the Siegfried legend, kills herself so that she may be burned with her beloved Sigurd. Hakon Jarl, the last great partisan of paganism in Scandinavia, woos in his old age beautiful Gunhild, but she is unwilling to expose her blooming youth to the risk of being burned with her aged husband.

The toil and trouble of life rested upon woman's weak shoulders; the menial work at home and in the field was her lot. The man roved in war or on the hunting ground, and—while at home—was an impassive onlooker of her labors. He gave himself up to the enjoyment of his barbarous pleasures of drinking mead, lying idly on the skins of the wild beasts killed by his rude weapons, or gambling with such desperateness as sometimes to impel him, when all else was lost, to stake wife and children, nay, his own person, on the result of chance. Freedom and absolute liberty of life was the manly ideal, since—according to the word of Cæsar—"trained and accustomed from childhood to no business or discipline (outside of war

and hunt, to be sure,) they do nothing at all against their own will."

A highly important occupation of the ancient Teutonic woman was the brewing of beer from barley and other grain. Thus, the *Edda* relates that King Alrek of Hördaland decides the question which of his two wives he is to discard, in order to terminate their eternal altercations in his household, by the superior skill of one of them in brewing beer. Also the making and the care of wine, which the Teutons learned to know and appreciate from the Romans, belonged to the sphere of woman, for women not infrequently served as cupbearers to the men in their halls. It is, however, true that the Suevi, at least, forbade the importation of wine within their realm, because they believed that men by its use became effeminate and unfit for heavy labors.

Even though we assume the menial labors of the household to have been done by slaves, yet we learn that royal women took an active part in washing. The pernicious strife between Brunhild and Gudrun breaks out in the business of veil washing. (In the old Norse version.)

In its beginnings Teutonic family life was undoubtedly hard; it was, however, destined to emerge from its early barbarity and one-sidedness into a strong, sound, and healthy moral relation between the sexes. Only thus could have been produced a race now dominant throughout the world, and always capable, by this development, of the best and highest progress in political advancement.

When first the light of history is shed by the two great historians, Cæsar and Tacitus, upon the Teutonic family eastward of the Rhine and northward of the Danube, woman has already conquered and appropriated to herself many traits of Freya and Frigg, the divine mothers

of the Teutons. Something holy and providential is perceived and acknowledged in woman's nature: she has already become priestess and prophetess and a political power in the state.

Of the sacrificing and prophesying priestesses of the Cimbri, the first Teutons who knocked powerfully at the gates of Italy, we shall speak later. When, in B. C. 58, Cæsar offered battle daily to Ariovistus, the Suevian king who had broken into Gaul and installed himself there, the latter, though a fierce and heroic warrior, did not accept it. Cæsar learned from Teutonic prisoners that the prophetesses, in consequence of lots and divinations, forbade the king, if he hoped for victory, to engage in battle with the Romans before the new moon. The battle was, however, forced by Cæsar and it ended with the total rout of the Teutons. Cæsar's envoy, Procillus, who had been held in chains by Ariovistus according to the barbarian fashion, escaped from his captors and related to Cæsar his terrible experiences in the camp of the king. It had been a vital question whether Procillus should be burned at the stake or kept for a future occasion, and this was thrice determined in his favor by the lots cast in his presence by the wise women. Here, as elsewhere, women interpreted the decree of fate. Tacitus mentions Albruna (called Aliruna by Grimm) as an ancient prophetess venerated by the Germans during the expeditions of Drusus and Tiberius in the interior of Germania.

The greatest veneration, however, ever enjoyed by a prophetess, fell to the lot of Veleda during the heroic war of liberation waged against the Romans by the Batavi, a branch of the Chatti, under their great leader Civilis. Veleda's influence extended far beyond the theatre of the uprising on the "Island of the Batavi." Johannes Scherr, the historian of German civilization, finds in her name an

allusion to Valkyrie, Vala, Völur, thus indicating the quasi-deification of Veleda. In reality, she belonged to the tribe of the Bructeri. She received embassies, formed alliances, and the most precious portions of the booty fell to her share. Her power was at its height when she correctly predicted the defeat of the Roman army. She dwelt solitary and inaccessible in a tower and was the Pythia of the Low-Rhenish tribes. Approach to her was forbidden in order to increase her divine prestige. On the downfall of Civilis, she was brought to Rome as a captive to enhance the triumph of the Roman conqueror, Crealis, the general of Emperor Vespasianus.

There are many other such divine women mentioned in the ancient books, though the records of their deeds are scanty. Ganna is a prophetess among the Semnones at the time of Emperor Domitianus. The Langobardian Gambara and the Alemannian Thiota belong to a late time, probably the ninth century.

From these few examples it appears clearly that—in spite of the harsh treatment of woman by the more ancient Germans—the veneration of her is inherent in the Teutonic soul. Hence prophetesses gradually become goddesses in the consciousness of the people; hence the depth of the later cult of the Virgin Mary (*Marienkultus*), and the extraordinary sentimental and poetic evolution of the Love Service (*Minnedienst*) which inspired and enriched what was perhaps, the greatest period of German literature and life.

The oldest traces of German literature left to us are, in fact, charms pronounced by such deified women. The Old Saxon word *idis* (from *ict, ictn,* work, activity, *i.e.*, the working, active, skilful one) means originally "divine virgin," especially a goddess of fate. This is illustrated in the two charms found in Merseburg—thus the first

story runs: The gods Phol and Wodan rode into the forest; suddenly Baldur's horse sprained his foot. Sindgund and her sister Sunna uttered a charm over him. Volla and her sister Freya did the same; but all in vain. Then Wodan, who understood such things well, uttered his charm. He charmed away the sprain in the bone, the blood, and the joint. He uttered the potent formula: "Bone to bone, blood to blood, joint to joint, as if they were glued." Great as the art of the four heavenly women is in the treatment of wounds, it is yet inferior to that of Wodan. But it is an indication of the Teutonic conception that the curing of the sick and the tending of the wounded appertains to the domain of woman.

It will furnish a more accurate idea of the alliterative form of this most ancient Germanic poetry if we place here a clever translation by Professor Gummere of the story just told:

> "Phol and Wodan fared to the holt:
> Then Balder's foal's foot was wrenched.
> Then Sinthgunt besang it and Sunna, her sister:
> Then Fryja besang it and Volla, her sister:
> Then Wodan besang it, who well knew how,
> The wrenching of bone, the wrenching of blood,
> The wrenching of limb: Bone to bone, blood to blood,
> Limb to limb, as if it were limed."

The second Merseburg charm attributes to the *Idisi* (wise women) the power, on the battlefield, of loosening prisoners' bonds. This is apparent from its text, which runs:

> "Once sat (wise) women (*idisi*), sat hither and thither.
> Some bound bonds; some hindered the host;
> Some unfastened the fetters:
> Spring from fetters; fly from the foe."

It describes the activity of the heavenly women, the Valkyries, in battle. They are, according to the charm,

divided into three detachments; the first, binds prisoners in the rear of the army which they favor; the second, engages the foe; the third group appears in the rear of the enemy where the prisoners are secured, and, touching their fetters, utters the formula of deliverance: "Escape from your bonds, flee from the enemy."

Though Weinhold, perhaps the foremost scholar on the position and achievements of early Germanic womanhood, does not concede the existence of a real priestcraft among the ancient Teutons, he gives, nevertheless, numberless examples of their great influence and prophetic mission. Like the above-mentioned mythological women, mortal women were supposed to know secret charms to make the weapons of their men victorious: some possessing the charm over the blade (*Schwertsegen*). This spell was worked by scratching secret *runes* (letters) upon the handle or blade of the sword while calling thrice the name of the sword god Tŷr.

The most potent influence of Teutonic women rests upon their guardianship of the sacred *runes,* which are a primeval, Teutonic method of searching the future: the power of divination. The Anglo-Saxon and Scandinavian word *run* signifies a letter, a writing, or literally a secret, mystery, confidential speech, counsel. A letter was also called *runstaef.* Little staffs with significant signs and symbols were thrown by women, as dice are cast, to the accompaniment of prayers and charms, and from the result of the cast prophecies were made. Odin (Wodan) himself taught the wise women the greatest of *runes* "which [in this connection] means both writing and magic, and many other arts of life." Whittier, *Kallundborg Church,* says of them: "Of the Troll of the Church they sing the *rune:* By the Northern Sea in the harvest moon."

The *runes* or charms are twofold. The good and wholesome ones are called *galdr;* the pernicious ones, carrying with them sickness, madness, and death, are called *soidr.* The women of magic possessed of the art of the *runes* were called *völur* or *seidkona,* and wandered through the land in fantastic attire, a dark cloak set with pearls around their limbs, a cap of black lambskin on the head, a staff with a brass button, set with stones, in their hand. Wherever they appeared, they were reverently invited to a feast and propitiated in every way, that they might be induced to practise beneficent magic arts during the night. They enjoyed an almost semi-divine veneration. There were, however, "balewise women" against whom the Scandinavian warrior was warned. "The sons of men need an eye of foresight wherever the fray rages, for balewise [horrible, hideous] women often stand near the way [with baleful runes] blunting swords and minds."

A still higher, more divine and poetic mission than that of bond breakers is assigned to the Valkyries—*i. e.*, choosers of the slain—or Walmaids. Odin, the supreme god of the Germanic Olympus, sends them out to every battlefield to turn the tide of battle and to make choice of those who are to be slain. Glittering in their armor and their waving golden hair, bright as the sun, they ride through the air and above the sea with shields and helmets and sparkling breastplates to execute the orders of the war god, whose handmaidens they are. With their spears they designate the heroes who shall fall and whom they afterward conduct to Valhalle (Valhöll), the hall of the slain, the heaven longed for by the Germanic warrior. This magnificent hall is in Asgard, the garden of the Ases, the gods of Old Norse mythology. Here Odin receives and welcomes the gods and all the *einherjes,* the brave warriors who died in battle.

The hall is resplendent with gold; spears support its ceiling, it is roofed with shields, and coats of mail adorn it. According to the *Elder Edda* it has six hundred and forty doors, through which nine hundred and sixty *einherjes* may enter side by side. The Valkyries make it a perfect paradise. As the servants of the divine host they bear the drink, take care of the mead horns and wait upon the table. Here they appear in the loveliness of their peaceful, housewifely mission. This unwarlike side of their nature should be emphasized, for it is apt to be forgotten when we think of Valkyries as spirits of the clouds flying over land and sea, driven by the wind, messengers of the storm god, shining in lightning, rattling in thunder.

Nowhere does the poetry inherent in the primitive Germanic conscience, in spite of all its apparent, warlike savagery, appear in a brighter light than in the many sagas relative to those superhuman, semi-divine beings. Their conception sheds a brilliant light upon the soul life of the primitive German as we consider it in connection with womanhood, and especially with womanhood elevated to the level of the divine.

In one way might the Valkyries be brought into subjection to man. A hero who surprised them bathing in the quiet forest lake obtained power over them if he succeeded in carrying off their feather garments, for he thus prevented them from flying away. In this respect the swan-maiden and the Valkyries are identical. A swan-maiden thus surprised must then follow the hero as his wife, until she perchance finds again her feather garment, for this will permit her to fly away as a swan. One of the loveliest passages in the *Nibelungenlied* is the story where fierce Hagen, the slayer of the sunny hero Siegfried, surprises the prophetesses of the Danube by stealing their raiment, and thereby forces them to reveal to him the

future fate of himself and of the Burgundians wandering to the court of the Hunnish king Attila, or Etzel:

"Spake one of the mere women—Hadburg was her name:—
Here will we tell you, Hagen, O noble knight of fame;
If you now, gallant swordsman, our raiment but restore,
Your journey to Hunland, and all that waits you more.

"Her words were glad to Hagen and made his spirits glad.
He gave them back their raiment. No sooner were they clad
In all their magic garments they made him understand
In truth the fate that waited his ride to Etzel's land.

"It was the second mere-wife, Sigelind, who spake:
'O Son of Aldriana, Hagen, my warning take!
'Twas yearning for the raiment my sister's falsehood made;
And if thou goest to Hunland, Lord Hagen, thou'rt betrayed.'"

The number of the Valkyries varies; more than a dozen are named in the *Elder Edda*. The belief prevailed that heroic women of transcendent beauty could become Valkyries through Odin's choice and love. In the Norse sagas we find Valkyries in the suites of great kings. In the poems of the *Edda,* which deal with the Völsungs and the Hniflungs, with their wonderful power, there are accounts of love between Valkyries and earthly heroes, ending in the premature tragic death of the hero. Best known and of the highest poetic value is the Völsung-saga of Brunhild (Brynhildr), the daughter of Odin, immortalized again in Richard Wagner's music-drama, *Die Walküre*.

In defiance of the order of Odin, Brunhild chooses victory for her favorite, Siegmund the Völsung. At the last decisive moment of the battle the Father of the Universe appears. Siegmund's spear is broken to splinters by Odin's sword, and he himself sinks dead to the ground to expiate the crime against Hunding's marital honor. The disobedient Valkyrie tries to flee from the terrible wrath of Odin; but he overtakes her and decrees that she shall

lie and sleep until a man discovers her and kisses her lips; to him shall she then belong. Moved by the sorrow of the proud maiden and mindful of his former love for her, Odin modifies his punishment by surrounding the sleeping beauty with a blazing fire, to frighten back every cowardly and unworthy man. Finally, after long, long years, Siegmund's son, the incomparable hero Siegfried (Sigurd), penetrates the fire and carries away the divine bride, kissed to life again, whose passionate outburst of delight is characteristic of the fallen Valkyrie:

"Hail to thee, Day!
Hail to you, Sons of Day!
Hail to thee, Night and thy daughter Earth!
Hail to thee, fruit-bearing field!
Word and wisdom give to us two, and ever-healing hands!"
(H. S.)

In her unbridled passion lies the cause of her destruction and also that of the beloved Sigurd. After their union, Sigurd abandons her for the love of Gudrun, and even inflicts upon her the disgrace of winning her for Gunnar, whom he impersonates. In an altercation with Gudrun, the Nibelung princess, she learns that it was Sigurd, not Gunnar, who conquered her and subjected her. Her wrath is unbounded. She causes the Nibelungs to murder Sigurd, but in reawakened love she kills herself to be united in death with her beloved.

Here we have the source of the lovely fairy tales of *Dornröschen* and *Sneewittchen*. In the former, the Valkyrie Brunhild is pictured as a beautiful princess, and the glowing flame becomes a hedge of thorns. Instead of intrepid Siegfried (Sigurd), who penetrates the flames, a fairy prince appears, and rescues the sleeping beauty, through a magic kiss, from the doom of eternal sleep. In the second story, the metamorphosis of Brunhild is accomplished through a poisoned comb which is thrust in Sneewittchen's head: as

Brunhild sleeps in her brilliant castle, so the maiden sleeps in the mountains in a glass coffin, guarded by seven dwarfs, until the prince rescues her.

But not in all cases are the divine women thus transformed into lovely fairies. Under the influence of mediæval theology and scholasticism and their hostility toward the lingering ancient faith, they are distorted into malicious, hideous beings—witches. Thrud, the name of a Valkyrie, is the mediæval designation for "witch."

In the oldest Germanic sagas we find frequently confounded with the Valkyries, the Norns, the rulers of the fate of gods and men. It is characteristic, indeed, of the Germanic world conception, as, in fact, also of the cognate Greek and Roman mythology, that the fate of men and gods rests in the hands of divine women; for where the Valkyries act by order of Odin, the Norns act independently and by their own free will. They weave the web of men's lives, "stretching it from the radiant dawn to the glowing sunset." The destiny of the world lies with them, and nothing that is, is exempt from their irrevocable decrees. Time and space are embraced in the domain of their influence: Urd (the Past), Verdande (the Present), and Skuld (the Future) supervise, as it were, the judgment place of the gods where they meet in council—at the sacred well, Urdharbrunn, at the foot of the ash tree Yggdrasil. It is interesting to note how their influence is reflected and depicted by Shakespeare's genius in *Macbeth,* where the three witches surely, though perhaps unconsciously, derive their origin from the Norse Norns. In the witches' kitchen in Goethe's *Faust* is brewed likewise the charm that controls the fateful lives of Faust and Gretchen.

Under such circumstances the elevation of woman among the Teutons was more of a religious than of a social character. The Teuton considered woman as a physically

weak but spiritually strong being, who had a just claim to protection and reverence. Though it is true that women prophetesses, like Veleda and Albruna with their far-reaching influence, were regarded rather as semi-divine beings than as ordinary women, and though the legal status of woman was thoroughly subordinated to that of man, being in fact about equal to that of a minor child, yet her honor and chastity were held sacred, and her intellectual gifts were highly prized. Her natural physical weakness began to be her strength, and her lack of legal rights was compensated for by her great spiritual influence in family and society.

The potential and inherent virtue, in the Latin sense, and the physical as well as moral vigor of Teutonic men began to assert itself earlier than among many other races further advanced in civilization. It rose unconsciously from the stage of crude sensuality to a free humanity. But we must in no wise modernize the single trait of the ancient veneration of woman, as mentioned above. Though harshness and cruelty were yet the order of the day, nevertheless, gradually the cruel tenets of primitive law began to be softened and modified in practice by many exceptions. This occurred especially in the higher levels of primitive society. The natural affections arising from family ties and blood relationship steadily transformed woman's status in fact, if not in law. What the dim, though growing intellect of the man, trained only for war and the hunt, could not compass, the natural reasoning power of woman, her natural womanly prudence, did accomplish. Concessions regarding the purchase money, which originally subjected her absolutely to the buyer, were made in her favor; the purchase of her body and soul became gradually the acquisition of the right to protect her; the husband's power over his wife's body became

more limited; her immolation with her dead husband fell into disuse; the widow's right over her children, even her male children, arose and increased. Womanly power and influence made many a free man dependent, regardless of law; women began to exert a tremendous influence over their husbands, their tribes, their state formations. All the Roman sources preserved to us prove that when the Romans, after the conquest of Gaul, entered upon the gigantic task of subjugating the Germans, women played a prominent part in the political upheaval which then occurred.

It is in the period of Roman attack that we meet for the first time a great royal character, a tragic type of a historical German woman: Thusnelda, the wife of Arminius (Hermann), prince of the Cherusci, the liberator of Germania from a foreign yoke. Her history is the oldest Teutonic love story. History, legend, and poetry have vied in idealizing and immortalizing her. Betrothed to another man, she is by force carried away by Arminius from her father Segestes, Arminius's political adversary, the friend of the Romans. Betrayed to the latter under Drusus Germanicus, she is captured. "Inspired more by the spirit of her husband than by that of her father—no tear, no complaint or entreaty came from Thusnelda's lips at her capture; with her hands clasped over her bosom, she looked down silently at her pregnant body. The news of the capture of his wife and of her slavery exasperated Arminius to mad rage. But in vain he flew to her rescue. She was carried to Rome and there bore Thumelicus. With her son and her brother Segimunt she adorned the triumph of Drusus, while the traitor Segestes looked on, as son, daughter, and grandson walked in chains before the carriage of the triumphator." Indeed, Strabo, the celebrated Greek geographer, confirms

the story in his *Geographica* (vii, 1, 4): "To them, conquerors of Varus in the Teutoburg forest, Drusus Germanicus owed a splendid triumph at which the foremost enemies were carried personally in triumph: Segimuntos, son of Segestes, chieftain of the Cherusci, and his sister Thusnelda, with Thumelicus, her three years' old son. Segestes, however, who from the beginning had not shared his son's policy, but had rather passed to our side, overwhelmed with honors, beheld how those who ought to have been dearest to him, walked in chains." Here Johannes Scherr makes the pertinent remark that, eighteen centuries before Napoleon had founded the Rhenish Confederacy, there were already in existence princes of that Confederacy; that is, traitors to the German cause.

How long Thusnelda outlived the disgrace is unknown. It is reported, however, that, to accomplish the revenge of the Romans, Thumelicus was trained to be a gladiator at Ravenna, if nothing worse. Göttling, in *Thusnelda and Thumelicus, in Contemporaneous Pictures,* 1856, seems to have proved that the beautiful marble statue of a German woman in the Loggia de' Lanzi at Florence represents Arminius's wife bearing herself with a wonderful majesty to impress the Romans with her regality.

Now, in contrast to Thusnelda's strength, we have Bissula, a picture of Germanic grace. Ausonius, a poet of the late Roman period, sketches the portrait of this German maiden—a prisoner who had been captured in the expeditions of Emperor Valentinianus I. against the Alemanni on the Neckar and Upper Rhine. She fell as booty to the poet, who stood high in pedagogical and political offices. The beauty and grace of this charming Alemannian maiden contrast strangely with the majesty and heroism and tragic bitterness of Armin's wife. The

slave Bissula becomes a queen, as the queen had become a slave. Ausonius speaks with enthusiastic tenderness of her shining countenance, her blue eyes and blonde hair. "Art possesses no means," he says, "to imitate so much grace.

"'Bissula, inimitable in wax or in color,
Nature adorned with charms, as art never succeeds.
Mix then, O painter, the rose with the white of the lily,
Choose then the fragrant blend to paint fair Bissula's face.'"
(H. S.)

The ancient Teutonic woman is, in general, represented as beautiful in countenance and form. Her rich, reddish-blond, flowing hair became the envy and imitation of the Roman ladies of fashion. Ovid and other poets mention how the Roman ladies tried to change their black hair to German blond. The *rutilæ comæ* of Tacitus, became a valued Roman article of trade. In Heinrich von Kleist's drama, *Die Hermannschlacht,* Thusnelda's revenge upon the Roman general Ventidius hinges upon an intercepted letter of his, containing a lock of her golden hair obtained by ruse, and sent to his Roman princess:

"Varus, O princess, stands with seven legions
Victorious on Cheruscan land:
Cheruscan land, mind well, where those locks do grow,
Shining like gold and soft like Roman silk.
Now mindful of the word spoken in jest by thee,
When last thou saw'st me parting for the war:
I send a lock of hair destined for thee,
When Hermann falls, to clip from his queen's head.
By Styx! the trader by the capitol can't offer it:
It's a love token from the foremost lady of the land:
The Princess of Cheruscia herself."
(H. S.)

The blue eyes, described by the Roman witnesses as full of fire and chaste defiance, the white rose cheeks and

the strong, well-proportioned form make almost ideal the beauty of the German woman when undefiled by foreign admixture. Emphatically does Tacitus state that the German tribes not taking in foreign blood became a genuine, unmixed nation, *similar only to themselves* (*Germaniæ populos, nullis aliis aliarum nationum connubiis infectos, propriam et sinceram et tantum sui similem gentem exstitisse.*)

The physical beauty of the ancient German woman was heightened by the fashion of her garments, though Tacitus relates that these were not essentially different from those of man. Despite the assertion of the historian, we do not doubt that a touch of innocent vanity was present: a cloak of skin or fur, held together by a gold buckle, or, in the case of the poor and lowly, by a thorn, constituted the outer garment. This usually covered a linen, purple-edged undergarment, somewhat like the Roman tunic, which, by its cut, left the arms, neck, and the upper breast uncovered. The question of dress is so interesting and so indicative not only of the state of civilization of any people, but also of their moral characteristics and habits, that works like Weiss's *Kostümkunde,* and Falke's *Deutsche Trachten und Modenwelt,* with the object lessons of good pictures, shed a flood of light upon the subsequent stages of the evolution of dress. The scanty clothing of the early historical period was chiefly for out-of-door use; it gave way to absolute nakedness at the hearth-fire of home, as well as at the common bathing of the two sexes.

Cæsar's account of the sexual life of the Germans of his time is of great importance to our theme. Says the imperial historian: "It is a matter of the highest praise to the youth of a people whose minds, from early childhood, had been directed to strenuous conditions and warlike

efforts, to remain sexually undeveloped as long as possible, since this made the body stately and vigorous, and strengthened the muscles. It was a disgrace for a youth to know a woman before his twentieth year. Nor could such things be kept secret, since both sexes bathed together in the rivers, and had only furs as garments, which left the body, to a large part, naked."

Their garments, as described above, remained, on the whole, unchanged for centuries; even until about the time of the Frankish kings. The upper body was free, though often cloaked, the lower body clothed in trousers, *braccæ,* the genuine manly German garment, and it is thus clothed that we meet their men in the first historic records. In winter a *sagum,* mantle, was added, according to Tacitus and Pomponius Mela. We have in plastic art only two pictorial reproductions: the so-called *Vienna gemma,* Augustus's Pannonian triumph, and the *Parisian gemma,* Germanicus's triumph, to show us objectively the vestments of the ancient Germans.

A word concerning the proper names of ancient Teutonic women may be in order here. Wilhelm Scherer, the eminent historian of German literature, divides them into two distinct groups: those which combine nature and beauty and tell of love, gentle grace, purity, and constancy; and those which apply to battle, arms, victory—counselling, inspiring, tending men. Perhaps two different epochs in the spiritual growth of the nation are thus indicated. Most ancient names seem to be: Skonea (*schön,* beautiful); Berchta (shining); Heidr (*heiter,* serene); Liba (living); Swinda (swift); compounds like Swanhvit (swanwhite); Adalheit; Brunhild; Kriemhilde (maiden in armor, with helmet).

As we proceed through the centuries with the aid of existing documents, we find again and again that in Germanic

women chastity is the fundamental trait, as loyalty and good faith is in man. And this despite the evidences of the violation of the rule which are found in the law that provided that adultery by women should be punished with unmitigated cruelty, and that the punishment—according to the ancient Germanic law—should be left entirely to the outraged husband. In the presence of her relatives, her hair, the pride of a free woman, is cut; then she is expelled naked from the house and scourged through the village, and sometimes buried to her neck and left to die. There is many a Teutonic Lucretia, though we meet also now and then with some German Judiths. The Langobard king Sighart falls in love with the beautiful wife of Nannigo, one of his men. She rejects his wooing with contempt. The prince, employing the old means of tyrants since King David's time, sends the husband as an ambassador to Africa, and forces the wife to submit to him. Her heart is broken; she lays aside the vestments of a noblewoman, and clothes herself in sackcloth and ashes. When her husband returns, she bids him kill her, since a stranger has stained his and her honor. Though her husband tried to console her, no smile ever sweetened her lips again.

Paulus Diaconus relates, in the *Gesta Langobardorum,* a trait of touching humility and modesty in a Teutonic woman, Radberg, wife of Duke Bemmo, in the Forum Julii. Conscious of her lack of physical beauty and deeming herself unworthy of her noble husband, she requests him to divorce her for some better wife. But Bemmo esteemed her chastity and loyalty higher than the beauty of others, and led an ideal life with her.

But in spite of many such lovely traits, it cannot be denied that a strong, fierce atmosphere pervades woman's life in Teutonic antiquity. The womanly emotions for good

or for evil almost surpass human measure. Tremendous feelings find expression in Titanic passions and actions, or, as Weinhold has it: "No tender tears are shed, but the flood of the eyes rolls, mixed with blood, over the cheeks and garments of ancient Teutonic woman." In a wild woe, Brunhild wrings her hands so that the cups rattle on the wall boards and the fowl start up frightened in the courtyard. The whole house shook to its foundations from her bitter laugh at Siegfried's death, which she had caused. Freya's diadem bursts because of the wrathful motion of her bosom. In the twilight between mythology and history love is as unmeasured as hate in Teutonic women. All the sagas of all the legendary circles (*Sagenkreise*), the sagas of Brunhild and Kriemhilde, of Hildegund, bride of Walther of Aquitaine, of Gudrun, of Sigrun, Helgi's wife, teach us the nature of the Teutonic woman's love and hate. Only the strength and power of the man awaken love in her bosom. She inclines toward even an unloved man when he proves strong and heroic; and only to the bravest is the Teutonic maiden willing to give her heart and hand. Brunhild stakes her own person as a prize for the bravest hero in the games for warlike honors. When she falls by fraud to the lot of the inferior and weaker man, her nature rebels in a terrific wrath that destroys all, the beloved and the unbeloved, and those connected with both. Pride, too, is the incentive of woman's action, thus spurring man to crime or to noble endeavor, as the case may be.

Harald Schönhaar (Fairhair), of Norway, wooes Gyda, daughter of a petty Norwegian king. But she will not sacrifice her virginity to a man who rules over a small land. Proudly she sneers: "Methinks it strange that none of the princes of Norway strives to conquer the whole land, like Gorm in Denmark, and Erich in Sweden." This

arouses Harald the wooer, and he begins that fight for the supremacy over all Norway that wins both lands and Gyda. But a still prouder maiden, Reginhild of Denmark, conquers him, though he has ten wives and twenty concubines. The maiden scornfully rejects his love, claiming that no king in the world is powerful and great enough for her to sacrifice her virginity for the thirtieth part of his love. Thereupon, Harald dismisses his thirty women and takes Reginhild as his sole bride.

The pride of the Teutonic woman extends, however, to an anxious regard also for her husband's honor. The old German romance of *Erek and Enite* demonstrates that she will rather lose her husband forever than see him disgraced by effeminate idleness.

Even the beasts succumb to the influence of Swanhild, daughter of Gudrun and Sigurd. On a false charge against her womanly honor, she is condemned to be trampled to death by the hoofs of wild horses. "But when she looked up at them, the horses dared not tread upon her, and Bike (Bicce, Sibich), the treacherous counsellor of the king, had a sack drawn over her eyes. . . . and so she ended her life."

The noblest poetic expression of the wonderful depth of ancient Teutonic love is set forth in the *Helgi* songs of the *Elder Edda,* the tragic power of which truly raises them to the standard of the Germanic *Song of Songs*.

Helgi, a Völsung, at the age of fifteen years, avenges the death of his father, Siegmund, on Hunding and his whole race, whom he exterminates in a fierce battle. As he is about to leave the battlefield, he sees the train of Valkyries riding through the air in their golden armor, rays of light shining from their spears and helmets. Helgi invites them to his triumphal feast in his royal hall. Yet

Sigrun, the most beautiful among the Valkyries, exclaims from her lofty white horse:

"'Woe is me! Other cares than feasting oppress my heart.
All-father has betrothed me to an unbeloved man.
Fierce Hödbroddr will carry me off in a few nights, if you,
O hero, shining in the beauty of youth, will not save me and challenge
him to mortal combat.'"

With these words she entwines caressingly her white arms around the neck of Helgi, whose heart melts and inclines to her. He challenges the hated rival, and on the morning of the combat he stands against the countless host of Hödbroddr, who is aided by Sigrun's father and brothers, who are resentful of the bold Helgi's suit. The earth trembles and shakes under the onslaught, but Helgi's resistless sword mows down his enemies. Beasts and birds of the field hold a rich repast. When the tumult of the battle subsides, Sigrun rides over the field, and her lamentation for her slain father and brothers is heard amid the exultations of victory. Only one brother, Dag, survives, and he weds her to Helgi. But impelled by the sacred duty of blood revenge, he breaks the peace which he has sworn. Odin himself, wrathful against the Völsung, offers Dag his invincible spear. In the ensuing combat Helgi falls. Before his sister, Helgi's loving wife, the slayer pleads the will of Odin and the Norns, goddesses of immutable fate, and offers rich compensation to her. But Sigrun breaks out in bitter woe, cursing her brother: he shall be a wolf out in the forest, all joy shall be far away from him, no horse shall carry him, the ship which may save him from his enemies shall stand still under him.

The tomb is piled up over Helgi's corpse. When Sigrun's maid goes to the grave, the dead master comes riding along and bids her ask his wife to soothe his wounds. Before he can lay aside his bloody armor, Sigrun embraces

him, lamenting how cold are his hands, how wet he is with the dew of the night. Helgi replies: "Thine is the blame; for every tear which thou weepest falls as a cold and piercing drop of blood upon my bosom. But let us be of good cheer and drink the sweet mead, let no one complain of the wound on my breast, since, though dead am I, my wife is with me." Sigrun prepares the couch to sleep on the breast of the beloved dead, as she did when he was still alive. Helgi, touched by so much love, exclaims: "It has happened what no one ever deemed possible: the white daughter of Hagen, the living one, sleeps in the arms of the dead." At the morning dawn, before the cock crows, Helgi is obliged to return to Valhalla, and Sigrun returns to her solitary palace. In the evening she awaits him, but waits in vain, and in her sorrow her heart breaks.

The motive of this legend lives in German literature in varied forms. Bürger has reawakened it in *Lenore,* the greatest German ballad.

But, to conclude the chapter on the Teutonic women of antiquity, it is necessary to return once more to the prose of history, where, for the first time, the women of the Teutons, in their general aspect, enter into the bright light of historical observation, in this instance so much the more valuable, since it is the observation of the enemy. In conformity with our other sources, the Greek-Roman historians, Plutarch, Dion Cassius, and Strabo, have to report regarding Teutonic womanhood only traits of tremendous strength, power, and love of liberty. Savage virtue and heroism are there, but not a single trait of grace and loveliness appears in their accounts. And if there is exaggeration, it simply proves the terror—the *furor Teutonicus*—which was inculcated by the Teutons into the hearts of the Romans at their very first encounter. The years B. C. 113–101 witnessed the first Titanic clash and conflict

between the Cimbri and the Teutones, mere splinters of the Teutonic race, and the world power of the Roman Republic at the height and zenith of its greatness. For the first time, Teutons thundered at the gates of the Alpine entrance to Rome, and thus began the incessant struggle which continued for nearly six centuries between the two most powerful races in the history of the world, until the Empire finally succumbed.

When one legionary army after another, led by the foremost commanders of Rome, had been destroyed under the onslaught of the two combined tribes, the Cimbri and the Teutones, it was only the military genius of Marius which finally succeeded in stemming the tide of the Teutonic flood, and then only after the tribes had divided their forces and, thus weakened, hurled their naked bodies against the phalanx of the overwhelming Roman army. When the legionaries of Rome pursued the defeated Teutones to their camp, Plutarch relates: "the Teuton women met them with swords and axes, and making a terrible outcry, drove the fugitives as well as the pursuers back, the first as traitors, the others as enemies, and mixing among the warriors, with their bare arms pulling away the shields of the Romans and laying hold on their swords, endured the wounds and slashing of their bodies—invincible unto death—with undaunted resolution."

An account by Valerius Maximus emphasizes not only the bravery, but also the chastity of the Teuton women. When captured, they requested of the victor Marius to consecrate them to the service of Vesta's sacred virgins, promising to keep themselves as pure and immaculate as the goddess and her servants. Upon the refusal of their request they strangled themselves the following night. Thus ended the battle of Aquæ Sextiæ in B. C. 102, with the annihilation of the Teutones root and branch.

In the subsequent year Marius destroyed the Cimbri also, on the Raudian fields near Vercellæ. Among their women were prophetesses, hoary with age, barefooted, clothed in white garments with iron girdles, and fine flaxen cloaks. Thus apparelled they went—sword in hand—to meet the prisoners of war in camp, whom, after wreathing them, they conducted to a large iron kettle. Then one of them mounted a high step and bending over the kettle, cut the throat of the prisoner who had been lifted over the edge, and prophesied from the blood which streamed into the brass vessel.

During the battle they drummed on hides fastened over the wagons, and made a horrible noise. When the largest and most warlike part of the Cimbri had been annihilated, and the Romans pursued the rest within the wall of the camp, they were astounded by a highly tragic spectacle. The Cimbri women standing in black garments of mourning on the wagons, inflicted death upon the fugitives: one upon her husband, another upon her brother, another again upon her father. But their own children they strangled and hurled under the wheels of the wagons and under the hoofs of the horses. Finally they laid hands upon themselves. One, it is said, was hanging from the top of a wagon with her children, tied with ropes, dangling from her ankles.

The later struggles, too, between the Teuton and the Roman offer many examples of the German woman's absolute contempt of a life which could be preserved only in shame and servitude.

When Drusus battled with the Cherusci, Suevi, and Sigambri, it happened that their women, besieged by the Romans in their wagon fortifications (*Wagenburg*), instead of surrendering, desperately defended themselves with everything that might serve as a weapon. Finally

despairing, they struck their children against the ground and hurled their dead bodies in the face of the enemy. The most perfect model of heroic stoicism in connection with those wars, Princess Thusnelda, whose fate we discussed above, was only the first woman among her equals. Teutonic women in those primitive times invariably followed their husbands to war, carrying food and encouragement to the warriors in battle, counting proudly the wounds of their husbands and sons, and nursing the wounded. Through threats or entreaties they restored many a tottering battle array, inciting the men to heroism.

Chapter II

The Years of the Wanderings

II

THE YEARS OF THE WANDERINGS

UNTIL the period of the migrations of the Teutons, the precursors of which were the hapless attempts of the Cimbri and the Teutones to invade the Roman Empire, the ancient world, as known to history, was sharply divided into two parts: the Roman world and the world of the Barbarians. The consequences of the invasion and infiltration of the Germanic barbarians into the northern and western provinces of the Roman Empire were the ethnographic combinations from which arose well-nigh all the nations of modern Europe. It is those barbarians who created the mixture of blood, of ideas and ideals, of institutions and customs, from which every State of Europe was born. Their influence for good, as for evil, was lasting and universal.

The combinations of the Teutonic races during the fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh, and eighth centuries, until the race movement came to some sort of a standstill under the Carlovingian dynasty, were numberless. When we consider those tribes rushing one upon another, the newcomers ever pressing upon those before them, as waves beating upon a shore, and see the first germs of incipient civilization overwhelmed again and again by swift following surges of barbarity, or even savagery,—when we observe newly formed states crushed and swallowed up by opposing

states, we have great difficulty in perceiving anything but the play of the blind, brutal forces of nature. The changes are countless, a tremendous revolution endures for centuries, and everything is in a state of flux; and yet, such were the influences evolved from this chaos that there is no modern Caucasian state, however remote, where the Germanic impulses springing from the migration period are not to-day visible.

But, in spite of the existing confusion, there was no epoch of human history when the influence of thought is more plainly manifest than in the time of the Teutonic upheaval that left no stone unturned. There was no German knight who did not endeavor to adopt some shred of the Roman Empire which he helped to tear to pieces.

Christianity, too, which for centuries was but a vague longing in the hearts of most men, began to arise and to assert itself, at first indefinitely, still groping in darkness and strongly intermingled with the ingrained and venerated pagan conceptions, then more and more as a living issue. Christianity so gained in force that at the time of supreme need it saved humanity from sinking back into the degeneracy of the Roman bacchanal. Under the action of Christianity the ephemeral barbarian confederacy crystallizes into a permanent political organization.

At the end of the third century of our era the Teutonic race is already, though indistinctly, consolidated into four large nationalities, or tribe leagues, with two inferior, though independent, branches. Where Tacitus, in the angle between the Rhine and the Main, had seen Sigambri, Bructeri, Chamavi, Tencteri, Chatti, there is now one great, though loose, confederation: the Franks. Between the North Sea, the Rhine, and the Elbe are the Saxons with the Angli in the north, and the Thuringians in the south. In the angle between the Rhine and the Danube,

the beehive of all tribes (*all man*), is the confederation of the Alemanni, mixed with Suevi (*Schwaben*); behind them, pressing toward and beyond the Rhine, are the Burgundians; and following closely are the Langobards, who appear on the middle Danube. Near the Baltic, which derives its name from the Gothic dynasty of the Balti, we have the Turcilingi, the Rugii, the Sciri, and the Heruli who were tattooed blue. Between the upper Elbe and the Oder Rivers, the Quadi (in Moravia) and Marcomanni (Bohemia) seem to disappear gradually, and are probably merged into the Suevi.

The Gothic or Scandinavian race is agitated by the same movements, disputing with Finnish tribes (related to the Turks and the Hungarians) the Danish and Scandinavian peninsulas and the isles of the Baltic: Gothia, Ostrogothia, Westrogothia, and the Isle of Gothland. At the same time they spread over the plains of eastern Europe. The Visigoths under the dynasty of the Balti and the Ostrogoths under the Amali occupy the steppes of Russia; behind them are the Gepidæ. The Jutes (from whom is derived the name of Danish Jutland) and the Vandals, perhaps mixed with the Slavic Wends, occupy the Baltic for two centuries. The race of the Slavs, as yet existing in almost complete historical darkness, is known to Tacitus but dimly by the name of Wends.

When brought in contact with the Romans, the purely Germanic individuality ceases, the tribes become Romanized; their gods change, their habits, their religion: a new world, undreamed in its southern radiance and sunny luxury, opens before their eyes, accustomed to the dreary north; victory itself carries with it corruption. In the third century Rome is no longer feared, in the fourth it is already considered a German prey. The infiltration goes on through the engagement of Teutons for Roman

military service. The German soldiers, with their barbarous strength of body, soon reappear as Roman *comites, duces, patricii,*—counts, dukes, patricians,—*i. e.*, supreme civil and military officers at the court; they enter also in masses as laborers, servants, *fœderati,* or auxiliaries. From such or from simple legionaries they rise to be dignitaries of a rank but a shade under imperial, like the Vandals Stilicho and Rufinus, who for a time uphold the existence of the Roman Empire.

It is true, then, that in those centuries of upheaval the Teutons lost many of their racial characteristics, of their stock of primeval sagas, but they also gained immensely from the intellectual, spiritual, and cultural influence of the southern nations that furnished them with a stupendous stock of basic material for their future progress. Christianization and amalgamation instilled into their Teutonic spirit the germs of that Romanticism which we are wont to consider as purely Germanic, while in reality it is an elixir of the Christian-Roman fountain assimilated by the Teutonic soul. The Roman Catholic Church working upon the soul through the senses—the only possible way to reach and penetrate the soul of primitive man, who is unfit for abstract thought,—created the "divine arts" poetry, music, architecture, in the progressive sequence of the centuries of German history.

In religious symbolism lies the root of Romanticism, the blossom of mediæval life: Romanticism, a Romance word in sound, is German in spirit. Its soul is the romantic ideal of love: woman is its centre. It radiates first from a fervent soul with an ecstatic, passionate devotion to the Christian *Allmutter,* the mother of God, the Holy Virgin, Saint Mary, who was from the first deeply revered by the Teutons, owing to their inherent veneration for woman. Among the Germans of all times, even the most corrupted

and dissolute, this spark of veneration is not entirely extinct. Love is surrounded with a halo in contrast with the severe Oriental treatment of women by the Church Fathers. The harsh words of the Gospels, "Woman, what have I to do with thee!" is transformed into: "Pure woman, and mother mine!"

Thus the picture drawn by the *Edda*—truly called the Norse Bible of the Teutonic race—of the doomsday of the world, the *Götterdämmerung,* is nothing if not a representation of the whirl of the immigration. Yet all that is valuable, culturally speaking, rises like a phœnix from the ashes. As, in the ingenious words of the poet, "Conquered Greece conquered, on her part, the fierce Roman conqueror and carried her (intellectual) arms into Latium," so conquered Rome transformed the fierce Germanic conqueror into a new man. The unity of the Roman Empire had furthered Christianity, and the complete German conquest mightily influenced the entire Germanic race in the direction of Romanization and Christianization, though the latter for long remained crude and was affected by the cult of the gods of Olympus as well as of those of Asenheim and Niflheim, and, even where not so affected, Christianity was divided between Arianism and the Orthodox Romanism. With the political conquest, however, a new order was by no means assured. The Empire was destroyed, it is true, but nothing firm, solid, or steady took its place. The wavering new political aggregates put in its stead were no longer purely Teutonic. They succumbed too easily to the treacherous and manifold, if silent, influences that on every side assailed them. The majority of such political groups, whether in Italy, in Gaul, in Spain, or in North Africa, lost their nationality and even the German language: they became Roman mongrels and some even turned against their old mother, Germania.

Even at home, the Roman Christian foreign culture seemed for a time destined to overwhelm Germanism, but the Alemanni in the south and the Saxons in the north and west proved too strong for denationalization and carried Teutonic principles triumphantly through all the phases of the struggle.

Having thus described the tribal existence of the Teutons in Germania proper, in order to give to our study of the cultural history of German womanhood full point, a word must be said about German colonization abroad.

The Burgundians, after a checkered career of adventurous wanderings from North Germany to the Alpine mountains of Savoy, conquered southeast Gaul in the fifth century. In the southwest, or ancient Aquitaine, the Visigoths settled, and, crossing the Pyrenees, conquered a large part of Spain.

When Odoacer, the German king of the wandering hosts, had dethroned the last shadow Emperor of Rome, Romulus Augustulus—an ill-starred, diminutive reminiscence of Rome's glorious inception as kingdom and empire —the Heruli were the dominant race. Their rule lasted but thirteen ominous years. The Ostrogoths, under the great Theodoric,—Dietrich von Bern, the paramount hero of Germanic saga and song,—replaced them and founded a more permanent government. In northern Italy, the Langobards succeeded the Ostrogoths and gradually extended their rule southward, and pressing upon the Italian domain of the Bishops of Rome, who, by this time, had asserted their supremacy and headship of the ruling church of the world, brought about that cataclysm which finally submerged the power of Rome under the flood of the Frankish universal empire. The Salian Franks had, in the fifth century, conquered northern Gaul from the Batavian coast to the Somme River; the Ripuarian Franks

formed a state along the Rhine, the Maas, and the Moselle, with Cologne as a capital. Chlodwig, the Salian Frank, one of the most cunning and unscrupulous kings in history, began, in A. D. 480, the unification of the Franks and the adjacent German tribes into one nation. After the subjugation of the Alemanni, the principal rôle, the hegemony within the Teutonic race, belongs to the Franks. Christianity becomes a political lever by which they extend their sway from north and east and finally create that Carlovingian-Frankish Empire which inaugurated the Middle Ages proper and founded therewith a stable Germanic civilization.

Up to this time, in spite of Christianity, the pagan imprint is still very strong. The Latin titles *rex, dux, comes,* are applied to the German chiefs, as they were in Italy under Roman rule; sovereignty passed but slowly from the body of the freemen to individual chiefs, a transition finally accomplished by Charlemagne—yet the old spirit of German liberty was not rooted out. The ancient Teutonic laws and traditions, though committed to mediæval Latinity, are German in spirit.

The political status remains as of old. There are two great divisions of the people: the free men and the unfree. The former are subdivided into nobles (*adalinge* or *edelinge*) and common freemen (*Gemeinfreie, liberi*); the unfree are either tributary (*Hörige, liten* or *lassen,* manumitted), or real serfs (*Schalke, servi*). Exactly the same division holds true for women. The serfs, men and women, are without rights, and are valued as chattels, though manumission or absolute liberation is possible. Bravery in war creates a "nobility of arms" (*Waffenadel*), based upon the sword; and thus renders this species of nobility accessible to all in the same manner that, among the Carlovingians, "court nobility" (*Amtsadel*) may be obtained

by the *ministeriales,* or civil servants, as the reward of merit or by the favor of the king. Women serfs, because of beauty or of manifest superiority, often become concubines, mistresses, and even wives of nobles and princes, and sometimes of kings.

Blood relationship, family, and the rulership of the housefather are in this early period the base and centre of social order. So the legal relation between man and woman is command and obedience; protection and responsibility. The wife is subordinate, and has no official voice or vote in the community or the body politic. Woman could not be a witness before a court, and in most states she was excluded from rulership over land and people, though this rule was frequently circumvented, broken, or repealed, for we early meet with women rulers or ruling women, who will be separately treated.

Though the laws in favor of woman's equality with man are still precarious, yet customs and traditions, as well as the ancient and innate veneration of German men for women, frame regulations for their strong protection. It is well known that every crime, including murder, but excluding high treason or assassination of the military chief, is atoned for by the payment to the family of the insulted, injured, or murdered person of an expiatory sum of money (*Sühngeld* or *Wergeld*) or cattle, according to the valuation by the ancient Teutonic law. This law, among most of the tribes, attributed higher value to woman, because she is defenceless, than to man. The *wergeld,* according to Alemannic and Bavarian law, is double for a woman, and, according to Saxon law, the double *wergeld* applies while a woman is able to bear children. The Frankish law prescribes in ordinary cases a treble *wergeld,* namely, six hundred solidi (shillings) or cows (which are equal in value); and in the case of a pregnant woman the

expiatory sum is seven hundred solidi. Johannes Scherr informs us how the Salian law determines accurately the fines for misdemeanors against womanly modesty. It says that a man who immodestly strokes the hand of a woman shall be fined fifteen shillings, and if her upper arm is stroked, thirty-five shillings, while if her bosom be touched he must pay forty-five shillings or cows. Many centuries later, in the highly polished, super-refined period of the Love Song (*Minnesang*), the *wergeld,* for an offence against a woman, on the contrary, sank to one-half of that inflicted for an act against a man, and this in spite of the increasing love service to women (*Frauendienst*), which, however, was degenerating to sensualism.

In the early times the housefather has the guardianship, *mundium* (from Old High German *munt,* hand), over his wife, daughters, sisters, and also the duty of protecting them. The father has the right to sell his sons during their minority and his daughters until their marriage, and this barbarous action is common. At the death of the father, the guardianship passes to the next *male* relative, (the *sword* relative, *Schwertmagen,* as opposed to the *spindle* relative, *Spillmagen*). In case of legal marriage, guardianship passes to the husband.

The law of inheritance is greatly in favor of sons, and daughters are frequently entirely excluded from participation in the heritage, or their share is reduced to one-half or one-third of the son's inheritance. This is, however, only in the case of real estate (*Odal*) probably because it needs the sword of the male protector, for the remaining or movable property is equally divided.

The conception of caste privileges, social birthright (*Ebenbürtigkeit*), is very strongly developed, inasmuch as women lose caste by marriage with inferiors and give up every claim to the inheritance of their blood relations

(*Sippe*); and the caste degradation results at one period in the exclusion from the inheritance of a free father of the children of an unfree woman.

It is but natural that, in the loosening of all the bonds of social order, during the wanderings, the ancient Tacitean purity and monogamy was, to a large extent, lost. Among the high classes, concubinage was the rule, since the lord had absolute power over the unfree maidens, and war and conquest have it in their nature to blot out all natural rights. We meet concubines, called *Frillen* or *Kebse,* everywhere in the lives of the great kings and chiefs. The Merovingian Franks are especially famous, or rather infamous, for their sexual sins. Charlemagne and Louis the Pious held concubines. The Church, especially at the synod of Mayence, A.D. 851, began to thunder against licentiousness, but in vain. Nor did the monasteries always remain pure from the taint. Winfrid, or Bonifatius, the apostle of the Germans *par excellence,* complains of the Frankish *diacons* (deacons) who kept four or more concubines. Frequently, however, the Church submitted, on political grounds, to a recognition of two or more lawful wives taken by one man. But the sense of dignity and self-respect on the part of the women themselves, as we have seen in the case of *Harald Fairhair,* finally forced monogamy upon the full blooded, semi-barbarous Teutonic warriors, as the leading principle of a lawful marriage.

Teutonic marriage is concluded when the bridal couch is entered and "one cover touched both" (*eine Decke das Paar beschlug*). To the very end of the Middle Ages the Church function is quite an indifferent matter, though as early as the Carlovingian time the Church prescribed a "confession of marriage in the Church" and "a priestly blessing." In the *Nibelungenlied,* Siegfried and

Kriemhilde, Gunther and Brunhild, marry without mention of a priest, yet on the morning of the bridal night the two couples go to the cathedral where a mass is sung. This latter statement is due to the attempt of the mediæval Christian poet to color, from numberless constituent parts of varied antiquity, the ancient Germanic heroic saga, originating in paganism, to the advantage of the newer religion. The *Nibelungenlied* arose about the beginning of the thirteenth century, and, with all its grandeur and splendor, is "like unto an ancient grove of the Teutonic gods forced below the roof of a Christian cathedral." The shining Valkyrie-patterned Brunhild, so magnificent in the pagan naturalness of her divinity and her surroundings, appears in the *Lied* as a gloomy, hermaphroditic being between two different and irreconcilable worlds. She is unfit for the Christian frame and setting that have been given her. Thus it is with Kriemhilde, with Siegfried, with Hagen. Their virtues and qualities and passions are not yet fully infused with the light which emanates from the Crucifixion.

During the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the legality of marriage first becomes dependent upon the consent of the Church. On the morning after the bridal night the wife, whose hair is now put up, no more allowed to wave freely as that of a virgin, receives the morning gift from her husband. She henceforth enjoys all the marital rights, but remains subordinate to the husband. He is the administrator of her fortune and has, *ipso facto,* its usufruct. But at his death one-half or one-third of the property acquired during his married life belongs to the wife according to the law of the Saxon and Ripuarian Franks. Chastisement of the wife still belongs to the husband; he might even inflict death or slavery for adultery. Divorce is possible if the wife is barren or the husband impotent.

Most interesting, historically speaking, is the circle of women surrounding Theodoric the Great, for the sagas have associated with him all the powerful women of the legendary history of the German tribes. He may be truly called the political forerunner of the Habsburg dynasty of the Middle Ages in the policy of strengthening dynasties by marrying royal women to powerful kings. Such marriages enhanced the strength and extent of Ostrogothic rule and cemented alliances with the other Teutonic tribes. Following, consciously or unconsciously, the rule of Theodoric, the Habsburgers, during the Middle Ages, built up by their judicious political marriages their tremendous dynastic power (*Hausmacht*), which finally became superior to that of the Holy Roman Empire itself.

These marriages gave rise to the proverb: Let others wage wars; thou, happy Austria, get married, for what realms the God of War gives to others are given to thee by the sweet Goddess of Love (*Bella gerant alii, tu, felix Austria, nube; nam quæ Mars aliis, dat tibi regna Venus*). Theodoric married his sister, Amalfreda, to the Vandal king Thrasimund; his daughter Theodicusa to Alaric; his daughter Ostrogotha to the Burgundian prince Sigismund; his niece Amalberga to the Thuringian king Hermanfrid. Political marriages, then, are as old as German history.

Amalasuntha, one of the daughters of Theodoric, shines preëminently in history as the worthy daughter of the greatest German king of the creative epoch. Her contemporaries, the authors Cassiodorus and Procopius, praise her as an ingenuous, high-minded, lofty woman, an excellent ruler, and a noble protector of arts and sciences. Early widowed through the death of Eutharich, also a scion of the race of the Amali, she becomes, upon the demise of her great father, regent and guardian of her minor son,

Athalarich. Reared in Græco-Roman culture, Amalasuntha inclined in her life and thoughts toward the Roman element in the state, and was to a certain extent estranged from the semi-barbarous Ostrogoths, who unwillingly submitted to her guardianship over her son, their king, and even more unwillingly to her rule over themselves. Though her rule was mild and wise, yet the discontent of the national party increased. Bitter reproaches were heaped upon the head of the noble queen for keeping young Athalarich removed from the company of the youth of Gothic race, for surrounding him with aged men, "though the mildest and wisest of their people," and for sending him to a Latin school of rhetoricians. For this was the training of a Roman emperor, not of a Gothic king, and their ancestors had taught them to despise such education. The queen was forced to yield to the popular demand, and the consequences of her surrender justified her fears. In the company of young Gothic nobles, Athalarich soon learned all the evil which the young barbarians had drawn from the Roman mire. His new friends had almost roused the youth to open rebellion against the "woman's rule," when, fortunately, he succumbed to the unaccustomed life to which his delicate constitution was not equal. By his opportune death, history is spared the record of the horrible tragedy of matricide which, in all probability, would have been enacted by the misguided prince—a tragedy occurring frequently in the history of the Merovingian dynasty.

Amalasuntha's fate is full of tragic pathos. A great ruler and an extraordinary woman, she had indeed the qualities to become the benefactress of her nation, had not the epoch of unrest and agitation, the unsteadiness and the irreconcilable conflict between an overripe Roman civilization and Germanic barbarism, made her a victim of untoward circumstances.

In order to strengthen her tottering throne, she elevated to the position of her husband and king the last prince of the race of the Amali, the unworthy Theodat, a man of whom Procopius says that "the principle of never tolerating a neighbor beside himself had raised him to power and riches." Immediately upon his ascending the throne, he openly sided with the so-called nationalist party against Amalasuntha, and murdered the last friends and partisans of the hapless queen. In her despair she appealed to the eastern Roman, or Byzantine, emperor, Justinian, and implored him for protection and hospitable reception. But she did not escape to Constantinople. Theodat seized her and sent her as a prisoner to a fortress on a small island in the Bolsen lake. Shortly after the arrival of the Byzantine ambassador, who brought her a courteous invitation to the court of Constantinople, she disappeared in a mysterious way, whether by Theodat's orders or through the intrigues of the Byzantine is not known; but the king hated her; and the ambassador, according to Procopius's narrative in his *Historia arcana,* had been bribed by Empress Theodora, the infamous wife of Justinian, to prevent by any means the appearance at the corrupt Byzantine court of the highly cultured, royal Gothic lady.

The history of the Langobards, a Germanic race which plays a great rôle in the Migration period in shaping the fate of Italy, and, by driving the Popes into the arms of the Franks, in elevating that race and the Carlovingian dynasty, furnishes us a kaleidoscopic sequence of royal women, who exhibit all the vices and passions, crimes and virtues.

Paul Warnefried, a Langobard noble, calling himself, in his clerical capacity, as an author, Paulus Diaconus, is, through his historical work, *De Gestis Langobardorum,* the principal source of our knowledge concerning his great but barbarous race.

For the first time in the history of the Langobards we meet with a wicked woman in the person of the murderess Rumetruda, daughter of the seventh Langobard king, Tato, who, through her lust of blood, precipitated her people into a terrible war with the Heruli.

Looking from the window of her palace she perceived one day a Herulian embassy, which, under the guidance of the brother of the king, had just concluded an alliance with the Langobards, and was now returning to its own country. The demoniacal woman sent to the prince of the Heruli a cordial invitation to a cup of wine. No hospitable feelings, however, had induced Rumetruda to send the invitation, but curiosity and scorn at the somewhat abnormal, heavy-set shape of the foreign prince. Soon she began to mock and ridicule him concerning his stature and finally enraged him to such a degree that he also began to upbraid her with insulting words. Revenge arose in the soul of the cruel woman, and, having conciliated him politely and forced him back upon his seat, she proceeded to the execution of her murderous plan. Behind the seat of her royal guest there was a large window covered with costly curtains, behind these she placed a number of Langobard warriors, bidding them hurl their spears against the curtain. Pierced by several lances, the prince of the Heruli sank to the ground; the flagitious woman had satisfied her revenge at the expense of the peace and the alliance between the Langobards and the Heruli. A terrible war was kindled by this violation of the sanctity o ambassadorial rights.

The savagery of these times of bloodshed in the constant wars, when every race had to be "hammer or anvil," appears in the stirring history of the death of King Alboin, the Langobard. The latter had, with the aid of the Avars, defeated the old enemies of his tribe, the Gepidæ, and with

his own hand slain their king, Kunimund. According to a barbarous custom of his time, he had a drinking cup fashioned from the skull of the slain enemy. Rosamunde, the beautiful daughter of the unfortunate king, Alboin took for his wife, his former consort, the Frankish Clodsunda, having just died. Sometime after these events, it happened that Alboin at a great feast held at Verona, was seized by the desire of drinking wine from the skull of his dead enemy. Flushed with wine, and careless of the feelings of his wife, he bade her, following his example, drink from the ghastly cup. Rage and desire for revenge filled Rosamunde's heart, but of necessity she obeyed the cruel order, though at the same moment she resolved upon a terrible retribution for the horrible deed. Through her personal charms she won Helmichis, the royal shield bearer, and while Alboin lay sleeping upon his couch after a heavy repast, he was pierced by the murderer's sword. To make sure of his death, Rosamunde had fastened Alboin's weapon to the bedpost so that he might the more safely be delivered into the hands of her lover. Helmichis's hope to succeed to Alboin's throne was vain. He was compelled to flee with Rosamunde to the eastern Roman prefect, Longinus, at Ravenna. Tired of her now useless tool, Helmichis, the treacherous woman was easily persuaded by Longinus to do away with the murderer and to marry the prefect. She offered to Helmichis, who was arising from his bath, a cup of poisoned wine. While drinking it, either the taste of the wine or a triumphant glance in the eye of his mistress suggested his fate, and, sword in hand, he forced Rosamunde to drink the rest of the poison and thus to die with him.

Turning from this ghastly tragedy, we may read the first story of romanticism. This is the tale of the love and marriage of fair-locked Authari, a successor of Alboin

in the kingship of the Langobards, to Theodelinda, daughter of Garibald the Bavarian duke. A brilliant embassy, headed by King Authari himself, who was incognito, arrived at the Bavarian court to sue for the hand of the beautiful princess. At a solemn festival, King Authari besought that Theodelinda herself should give him a draught of wine. The lady gratified his desire, and Authari, charmed by so much loveliness, caressingly stroked the hand of his future bride; she, blushing at his boldness, modestly cast down her eyes. Later on, she complained to her nurse of the boldness, but the wise old woman consolingly assured her: "No simple Langobard nobleman would have dared the deed; this man can be no other but the king himself and your bridegroom." Having obtained the consent of the duke and the princess, the Langobard embassy, accompanied by a host of Bavarian nobles, joyfully rode homeward. Arrived at the frontier, Authari, his heart swelling with love, raised himself aloft in his saddle and hurled his battle-ax with a powerful arm deep into a tree, exclaiming: "This is the throw of Authari, the Langobard." Unfortunately, the romance ended shortly after the marriage. Authari died one year later, as the rumor goes, by poison. Theodelinda became a passionate missionary of Christianity among the German tribes; and it is a general fact that royal women, as we shall see later in the case of the Christianization of the Franks, were the most ardent propagators of the faith. Christianity appealed especially to women because of its spirit of humility, of charity, and of submission to a higher will. The Church showed due gratitude by canonizing many noble and deeply pious women of the time. After the death of Authari, Theodelinda, seeing that the reins of rulership were too heavy for her, looked for the worthiest of the Langobard princes, to whom she might offer her hand and heart. Agilulf,

the brave Duke of Turin, was her choice. A prophetess had, on the day of Theodelinda's marriage with Authari, prophesied to Agilulf that he would become the consort of the Bavarian princess. Theodelinda now summoned him and offered a cup of welcome, which the duke accepted with a grateful kiss on her hand. Blushingly she withdrew her hand, with the words: "he should not kiss her hand who was permitted to kiss her lips and cheeks." The overjoyed vassal, who had always suppressed his love for his queen, saw his most secret desire fulfilled, and lovingly embraced her. And the queen never had to regret her choice.

In strange contrast to the attractive and poetic queen Theodelinda stands the detestable Romilda, wife of Duke Gisulf of the Forum Julium. At the time of the invasions of the savage Avars, she was compelled, with her husband and her children, to take refuge in the fortress of the Forum Julium. One day she noticed, from the height of the wall, the handsome form of the young Avar prince Cacon, and the undutiful woman was seized with a violent passion for the fair barbarian. Secretly she sent him a message that she would open the fortress for him, if he vowed to take her for his wife after the conquest. The Avar consented; and having become master of the important stronghold, he married Romilda. But after the bridal night, to shame and disgrace her, he turned her over to twelve Avar warriors; and when they had wrought their will upon her, he caused her to be impaled on a pole in the open field, exclaiming: "This is the husband thou art worthy to have!" Paulus Diaconus, while condemning Romilda, praises the exemplary conduct of her two chaste daughters, Appa and Gaila, who, to protect their virtue, placed pieces of putrid meat between their breasts. This heroic measure drove the assailants back, but unjustly

secured to the entire Langobard nation the reputation of a bad odor. Pope Hadrian evidently credited the slander, for, when he seeks the aid of Charlemagne against Desiderius, he writes of the "perjurious and stinking nation of the Langobards." But our two chaste virgins escaped and were richly rewarded for their virtue, as one was married to the Alemannian duke and the other, to the Bavarian.

We find a curious lack of foresight related of another Langobard queen, Hermilinda, wife of Cunipert. The queen once surprised Theodata, a wondrously beautiful Roman slave, of patrician family, in the bath. Her form was exquisite, her golden hair flowed down to her very feet, and the queen could not help praising her charms to the king. The consequence was that in due course of time Theodata gave constant pleasure to Cunipert, and Hermilinda became an inmate of a fine monastery named after her, where she died in the odor of sanctity.

The migration of the Teutonic peoples had been in great measure spontaneous, it is true, but the impetus of the avalanche had undoubtedly been tremendously increased by the irruption of a mysterious nomad people, the Huns, who broke forth from the steppes of middle Asia like a hurricane, hurled the Alans to the ground, overpowered the Ostrogoths, pushed the Visigoths over the Danube into the eastern Roman Empire, and, occupying the Roman province of Pannonia (Hungary), made it the centre of an empire which, though loosely connected, extended, more or less, over the length and breadth of Europe. About the middle of the fifth century the Huns arose anew from their Pannonian seat, and again threw Europe in a turmoil. The moving spirit of that commotion of savagery and barbarity which seemed to shake the three continents known to antiquity was Attila, called Etzel in the German lays and sagas, the "scourge of

God" (*Godegisel*). His hordes were estimated at more than half a million warriors. His death was an event of immense political significance, and appears in the German saga in many romantic forms. The historian Jordanes relates, after Priscus, that Attila died suddenly of violence during his bridal night, while lying intoxicated beside his young wife Ildico (Hildikô). In the morning his servants found him in his blood, but without wounds, beside him was the young wife with downcast eyes, weeping under her veil. The circumstances of his death were such as to throw suspicion upon the young woman. Ammianus Marcellinus reported as a fact that "Attila came to his death at night by the hands of a woman." But the legendists have tried to establish motives for the deed of violence, and nothing was more natural than the story that Ildico committed the deed out of revenge for Attila's murder of her relatives. According to the poet Saxo and the *Quedlinburg Chronicle* she avenged the murder of her father.

The famous *Nibelungenlied,* however, in its fundamental Norse form shapes the story as follows: Attila, the Terror of Europe, is the consort of the Burgundian princess Hild. He conquers and treacherously kills her brothers, the Burgundian kings Gundaheri, Godomar, and Gislahari, sons of Gibica, and afterward meets his death by the hand of their sister, his wife.

Felix Dahn has immortalized Ildico by his genius, and made her the most ideal, heroic woman of the Migration period. Reared in the palace of her father, King Visigast, in the land of the Rugii, she gives her tender love to Daghar, the son of Dagomuth, King of the Sciri; but a dark cloud hovers over her young life. Attila has heard of her incomparable beauty, and is still further aroused by the descriptions of her charms given by Ellak, his son by a

Gothic princess. The Hun resolves upon the possession of Ildico.

Accompanied by her father and her betrothed, Ildico appears, by order of Attila, at the Hunnish court in Pannonia, where she is received with barbarous splendor and conducted into the reception hall. Here she sees the terrible Hun for the first time, but she was not frightened by the hideousness of the man; proudly erect she looked in his face firmly, defiantly, menacingly. He recognized in this glance such a cold, fathomless hate that he involuntarily closed his eyes before her: a slight shiver of a mysterious fear moved his frame; he dared not meet again her eye which pierced him, but he drank her overwhelming charms with the unbridled passion of the barbarian. Then the feast began, accompanied by the wild, discordant song of a Hunnish bard, in which he hurled scorn against the Germans. The bitter stanzas aroused Daghar to warlike poesy, which nearly cost his life at the hands of the wrathful Hunnish princes. Attila personally interfered so that hospitality should not be violated even toward hated Germans. But only for a moment is the protection extended, for by accident Attila obtained information of a mighty conspiracy of Visigast, Daghar, and Ardarich, king of the Gepidæ, and then the full cup of his wrath is poured over the German princes, whom he reproaches with perjury and murderous intentions against himself. Foaming, he announces their punishment. The old king shall be put on the cross, the youth shall be impaled "behind my sleeping hall! Thou shalt hear his screams of agony, fair bride, while thou becomest mine."

The night arrives; the king of the Huns orders the sleeping hall to be prepared. For the first time in forty-six years he has the high pitcher of gold filled with unmixed Gazzatine wine and placed in his bridal chamber. He

desires to gain courage to face the glances of the beautiful, but terrible bride. She is locked in the bridal chamber; no weapon, no means of escape can be found by her despairing search. To her enters the "scourge of God." He tries to win her by the promise that her son to be born shall become the lord over the world, the successor of Attila. She rejects the very thought of becoming the mother of a son whose father should be Attila, she would rather crush the head of the monster at birth. To give himself courage for the struggle with the proud, chaste German princess, the king drinks the heavy wine in eager draughts, and, unaccustomed to the potion, sinks into a heavy sleep. Ildico strangles him with her own golden hair, as he lies in drunken stupor.

When on the next day, after the long bridal night, the vassals of Attila break the heavy oaken entrance, they find their master dead on the floor, in a pool of blood. A loud, boisterous, barbaric mourning and lamentation arises in the Hunnish camp over the death of the greatest hero and ruler of their race. The fate of Ildico and her relatives seems sealed. But at the most critical moment help appears in the person of Ardarich, King of the Gepidæ, and his retinue, who at the last moment save the Germans from the revenge of the exasperated Huns. The German tribes rise in masses and, after a few months, the liberation from the Hunnish yoke is accomplished.

The fame and glory of fair Ildico as the liberator of her people from the yoke of Attila rings from tribe to tribe in epic sagas and lyric lays. The song of Daghar, her bridegroom, in honor of the heroine, immortalizes her thus:

"Hail to you, heroes in golden hair,
Good Goths, Gepidæ, sprightly with spears;
Greetings to you, glorious Germans!
Exult rejoicing to sounding harps:

He failed and fell, terror of holiness,
Scourge of God, Etzel the Evil!
Sword struck him not, nor shaft of the spear.
No: in darkness of night, vicious viper
Had crushed its hideous head.
Woman of woe, Ildico, the mighty maid,
Avenged with awe the races of men
And holy honor with heroic deed.
Sing to the harp the wailing song,
Raise it rousing to Daghar's bride,
The shimmering, shining savior,
Guarding German men prison-bound:
Ildico, idol of fame,
Hail to thee, lofty one, hail!" (H. S.)

The extensive Hunnish circle of lays throws light on the life and love of German womanhood during the centuries of wanderings; and so powerful is the influence and impression made by the Asiatic onslaught, that there is hardly a German saga of any importance that does not stand in some kind of relation to the Hunnish conquerors. To "sing and say" was an ancient talent of the Teutonic race, whose warlike life, with its bravery and heroism, inspired mightily to music and song. But the migrations, with their powerful changes, the contact with formerly unknown peoples, altered considerably the trend of the ancient traditions and the sagas of a world which they had abandoned. Indeed, many of the ancient racial sagas vanished from the memory of the Germanic tribes. Christianization and Romanization instilled into the souls of the race the germs of *romanticism* which rapidly overspread the old Germanic paganism with a luxuriant growth of new ideas founded on new ideals, and, great as that poetry is, it shows everywhere a contrast and a conflict between two different states of existence.

The Anglo-Saxon *Beowulf,* in its original Teutonic tongue, introduces us to the primeval life of Germanic heroism and warlike turmoil at the dawn of a still mystic past. The

oldest High German lay, of *Hildebrand and Hadubrand,* telling of a superhuman duel between father and son, reveals to us the Titanic fierceness of the era of wanderings. We discover, however, in the third great poetic remnant, the *Saga of Walthari of Aquitaine,* not only the same descriptions of tremendous conflicts, of perfidy and greed, of joy over blood and wounds, but also the new elements of love and the loveliness and delicacy of the relations between the hero and his bride. The ancient legend, however, is transmitted to us only in the Latin garment in which Ekkehard, the monk of Saint Galle, clothed it in the tenth century, when the German language was at its lowest ebb and ecclesiastical Latin covered everything. But though the garment be Latin, the spirit of the saga is thoroughly German.

Walthari of Aquitaine, though composed in the tenth century, is a monument of love, and tells us graphically of the position of woman, at least in the upper stratum of ancient society, at the time of its composition. Attila King of the Huns, who appears here in a very different light from that which throws such ghastly rays upon him in Felix Dahn's novel, *Ildico,* is represented in the epic of *Walthari* as almost a Germanic hero; and his career is pictured as a glorious conquest, in which he crushes all resistance. Like a torrent in flood, his hosts roll over the land of the Franks, the Burgundians, and the Aquitanians. Resistance is out of the question; hostages are demanded and given to guarantee faithfulness and peace. Hagen, Hildegund, "the pearl of Burgundy," and Walthari are taken to King Etzel's court. Here the romance begins. Hildegund, through the grace of her manners, her beauty, and her skill as a housekeeper, endears herself to Queen Ospirin, Attila's wife, who makes her treasurer and stewardess of her household. Hagen and Walthari become the

heroes and heads of the Hunnish army. Hagen, however, seizes the first opportunity for flight on the news of King Gibich's death reaching him, believing himself thereby freed from all obligation toward Attila. Walthari, who has become better beloved by the Hunnish king than were his own sons, also meditates escape, a great longing for fatherland, parents, and friends having seized him. In the hope of escape, he declines marriage with the noble Hunnish maiden offered him by the king, under the pretext that love would interfere with his duties as a warrior and leader; for he who has once tasted the delights of love is weakened and unfit for deeds of valor. At this time a distant subject tribe revolts. Walthari is placed at the head of the army sent to crush the revolution, accomplishes acts of great heroism, and returns victorious. A triumphal feast is celebrated, and while the king and his retainers are overcome by wine and sleep Walthari prepares for escape.

Long before, however, he had won the consent of the maiden to whom he had once been betrothed as a child, and whom he secretly loves, to follow him in his flight. Weary and thirsty, he met Hildegund and asked for a drink. He tenderly kissed her hand and, while drinking, held and pressed it lovingly. He reminded her how they were betrothed as children. Hildegund, however, with maidenly modesty, mistook his advances for scorn. Said she: "Why dost thou let thy tongue speak whereof thy heart knows naught? Thou dost not desire a maiden like myself." But he convinces her, and in humble confidence Hildegund declares she will follow whither her beloved one will lead.

Now the occasion offers itself during the feast of victory. Well armed, and with horses laden with treasures, the lovers flee from the Hunnish court. During the day they

hide in thickets; at night they ride over wild, almost impassable paths. Not once does an unchaste desire enter the heart of the hero, though he is brimming over with life and love. Thus they reach the Rhine, cross it near Worms, and seek a safe refuge in the Vosges Forest (Wasgenwald), to take the first rest since the night of their flight. Hildegund sings her hero to sleep; Walthari, his head in her lap, intrusts himself to the watchfulness of his love. But Gunther, King of the Franks, has heard of the treasures which Walthari carries; and despite the resistance of Hagen, who is pained by the necessity of fighting against his former brother in arms, he attacks the fleeing hero with twelve of his best warriors, including Hagen himself. Hildegund takes the approaching warriors for Huns, awakens Walthari, and entreats him to kill her, that she may not fall into the hands of the enemy. No one shall ever touch her body, as she is not to be his. It is not our task here to describe the ghastliness of the wounds inflicted, and Walthari's victory at the cost of the loss of a leg. Hildegund, in true old German fashion, again appears as an angel of mercy: she tends the wounds of the warriors and mixes their wine, as merry jests and friendly speeches cement the reconciliation. Walthari and Hildegund travel on to Aquitaine, where they are received with joy, and celebrate their marriage. Thus, we are able to gather from the *Walthari Saga* the traits of womanly modesty, humility, faithfulness. The woman's watch over the sleeping hero is especially touching. Her purity makes her ask for death when she sees the end of her hero and her own shame. Chaste and undefiled, she enters the realm of her future husband.

Most important among all the tribes of the German nation, and of most abiding value and influence for the future not only of Germany, but of Europe, were the Franks.

The early history of that great and important people, or rather bundle of tribes, is wholly legendary. Their legends describe certain characteristics of weakness and vice of the men of that Merovingian dynasty which again furnishes us rich material for the study of royal womanhood, which, with few exceptions, was of the most depraved character. Our principal contemporary source is a *History of the Franks* by Gregory, Bishop of Tours (A.D. 538–593). Though called the "Father of French History," we must confess that his honesty is equalled only by his credulity. The history of the Merovingian women belongs locally to France, but racially to Germany; it would, therefore, be impossible to leave it unnoticed in this volume.

One of the earliest kings of the Merovingian dynasty was Childeric, who, owing to his luxury and vices, was driven out by the Franks. He retired in exile to Bisinus, King of the Thuringians, where he seduced Basina the wife of the hospitable king. Childeric had left behind in Frankland a loyal friend with whom he had divided a gold piece, the friend promising when times were auspicious to send his half as a signal for Childeric's return. Eight years passed. The gold token reached the wandering king and he was restored to his realm. Basina soon afterward joined him at his court. She followed him, she said, because he was the bravest man she knew, but she warned him that she would desert him if she could find a better and mightier man than he was. This woman bore Clovis, a son who was worthy of his mother. In 493, Clovis took for his wife a Christian woman, Clotilde, the pious and beautiful daughter of Chilperic of Burgundy. The importance of this marriage of Clotilde to the pagan Clovis is self-evident, and it may have been suggested by the famous bishop, Saint Remigius. Clotilde at once began

earnest efforts to convert her royal husband, but at first without avail. Everything tends to prove that Clovis was exceedingly tolerant, or perhaps rather indifferent, toward the Christian religion. His resistance was entirely passive, and without prejudice. Clovis's sister, Lantechilde, was an Arian, so was Autofleda, Theodoric's wife; but Albofleda, another sister of Clovis, remained a pagan. Clovis allowed the Christian baptism of his first son, who died in infancy. He reproached his wife, because he in a measure ascribed the infant's death to the influence of baptism, yet he consented to the baptism of the second son, Chlodomir, who fell ill, but survived. There was no spirit of propaganda in the naturalistic religion of the pagan king; he gave his wife a free scope, but refused to adopt the doctrine she advocated.

In the fifteenth year of his reign, Clovis was at war with the powerful Alemanni. During the battle of Tolbiacum (Zülpich) he sees with apprehension the ranks of the Franks giving way before the rage of their opponents, and vows to adopt the religion of Christ, if He grants him victory. "O Christ," he exclaims, according to Gregorius of Tours, "I invoke devoutly thine glorious help. If thou accord me victory over these enemies, I shall believe in thee and shall be baptized in thine name. I have invoked my gods, but they are not ready to aid me." After the victory, he loyally executed the promise he had made to the God of Clotilde, the queen perhaps taking good care that the vow should be fulfilled. Bishop Remigius, with that prudence and political wisdom which always guided the princes of the Church, proceeded very slowly in the matter until he was assured that the consent of the Franks had been obtained. Three thousand of them allowed themselves to be baptized with their king, an event of the greatest importance in the world's history, for thereby the advance of Arianism was checked and heathenism

was cast down. Clotilde, a woman and a queen, thus inaugurates the Christianization of the Germans, for Clovis thus becomes a "new Constantine" and the precursor of Charlemagne, the unifier of the Germans, the founder of the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation. The words of Bishop Remigius are fulfilled: "Bend thine head, proud Sigambrian: adore what thou hast burned heretofore; burn what thou hast adored heretofore." From this time on Clovis's life is but a chain of successes. It is true that all those successes of the most Christian king (*rex christianissimus*), a title bestowed upon him and his successors, were attained by atrocity and perfidy surpassed only in the later history of his own dynasty, and then by the female members of the royal line. The central point of his policy was the murder of the smaller Frankish kings so that he might be the sole chief of the entire people. He caused Sigebert of Cologne to be slain by his own son, whom he then assassinated, thereby securing for himself the kingship over the Ripuarian Franks. He dispossessed Chararic and his son and, later, killed both for the sake of greater security. He slew Racagnar, King of Cambrai, and the latter's brother, Richard, with his own hand, and, later on, murdered their brother, Rigomer; so that the tale of deaths is a long one. The manner in which the Christian religion aided Clovis in the execution of his ambitious plans, shows with terrible truth how deeply in the sixth century the ideal of Christianity had sunk from its lofty height. No one of his contemporaries ever reproached Clovis for his crimes; the Franks sang them in lays; and the pious Bishop Gregory of Tours having related the murder of Sigebert, adds naïvely: "Every day God thus felled his enemies to the ground and increased his kingdom because he walked with a pure heart before the Lord and did what was agreeable in his sight."

His four sons, when among them was divided the Frankish realm, soon found a pretext to wage a religious war against the Arian Burgundians. Their king, Sigismund, after the death of his first wife, Ostrogotha, a daughter of the great Theodoric, took a second wife who, like a real stepmother, ill-treated the young son of the king. When the youth once bitterly reproached his stepmother for wearing the garments and jewels of his mother, the wicked woman persuaded the king that his son aspired to his throne. She attained her purpose: the youth was murdered. But Nemesis soon overtook the murderer of his son: he lost his throne and his life in battle against the Franks.

Besides Clotilde, the pious wife of Clovis, we meet, among the many women of terrible moral depravity, with another saintly woman in the Frankish dynasty. Chlotar, the youngest of Clovis's four sons, after having conquered the Thuringians, though he had numberless wives and concubines, took Radegundis, the daughter of the defeated Hermanfrid, for a wife. But the saintly woman shrank from the touch of the immoral king, and threw herself on the icy stone pavement,—unmindful of the pain it gave her body, for her soul was filled with the agitation of ardent religious passion,—and spent her time in prayer and devotion. When she returned to the bridal chamber, neither the heat of the fire, nor the impure royal bed could restore the natural heat of her body; and the king declared that he possessed rather a nun than a wife. Radegundis succeeded in obtaining a divorce from Chlotar and retired to a cloister, where she obtained the dignity of a deaconess, an honor which canonical regulations reserved only to virgins. In the cloister founded by her in the neighborhood of Poitiers, Radegundis introduced a very strict discipline, she enriched the house with precious relics, and

passed the rest of her life in pious devotions and expiations for the sins of Chlotar, who was sinking deeper and deeper into the mire of moral corruption.

A story is told by Gregory of Tours concerning Ingundis, one of the concubines of Chlotar,—the pious bishop calls her *uxor* (wife), however,—which is worth repeating. Ingundis, in the full possession of the love of Chlotar, begged of him to secure a worthy husband for her sister Aregundia, and expatiated on the physical qualities and moral virtues of her sister. Chlotar betook himself to her country residence, and as she pleased him well he married her. Then he returned to Ingundis and informed her that he had given her sister the best man he could find in the realm of the Franks, namely, himself. With bitter disappointment in her heart, she, according to the statement of the chronicler, meekly submitted, saying: "What may seem good in the eyes of my lord, he may do; only may thy maid live in the grace of the king."

The fratricidal and internecine wars of Clovis's four sons were yet surpassed during the next generation by crimes and atrocities which overstepped all the limits and bounds of nature. Of Chlotar's four sons, only Sigebert's character is praiseworthy. Gregory relates that Sigebert was greatly ashamed of the disgraceful alliances of his brothers, who married daughters of the people of the lowest strata of society and changed them as lust and caprice prompted. Sigebert, however, married the daughter of Athanagild, King of the Visigoths. Her name was Brunehild (Brunehaut), a woman of great beauty and excessive vices and passions, whose name is linked in history with those of the greatest female criminals of royal blood.

Chilperic, Sigebert's degenerate brother, jealous of the latter's alliance, asked in marriage Galswintha, Brunehild's sister, but he soon sacrificed her to the ambition of

Fredegond, one of his concubines, who had the queen strangled and then occupied her place. This blond-haired woman of low birth, with most alluring charms and versed in all the arts to arouse passion, soon reduced her royal paramour to such subjection that he had her crowned with great pomp in his capital of Soissons. Beginning with this marriage, atrocities do not cease until the entire family becomes extinct. But to this very day—to quote the words of a French poet—"The fair, the blonde, the terrible Fredegond is unforgotten and sung in lurid songs from Austrasia to Périgord."

Brunehild undertook to avenge her sister; the terrible struggle began between the Frankish slave girl and the daughter of the King of the Visigoths, a dramatic strife which has left an enduring memory in the annals of the history of crime. A son of Chilperic joins his father's enemy, and, with his aid, Sigebert is victorious everywhere; but when, in his city of Vitry, he is on the point of being raised upon the shield as king over the land of his brother, Sigebert is assassinated by two emissaries of Fredegond, who thus once more saves her husband by crime. The widowed Brunehild was at the time in Paris with her five-year-old son Childebert, and, as it seemed, at the mercy of Chilperic. But upon the news of Sigebert's death, Gundovald, an Austrasian chief, brought Childebert from Paris and had him proclaimed king. Brunehild was exiled to the basilica of Saint Martin's Cathedral, at Rouen. The oath of Fredegond upon sacred relics that she will not harm the fugitives is violated at once. She murders two sons of Chilperic, also Bishop Tractesetatus, who had solemnized the marriage. Brunehild saved herself by flight, and an even more sanguinary civil war ensues, in the course of which Chilperic too is murdered. At last the flagitious murderess Fredegond, at

the age of sixty, equally dreaded and abhorred by friend and foe, dies—strange to say—by a natural death.

Her rival and lifelong enemy Brunehild, who had vied with her in crimes and vices, met with a far more terrible end. After many years of further struggle she fell into the hands of Chlotar II., a son of Fredegond, who inflicted upon her a terrible punishment. Having charged her with the murder of at least ten Merovingian princes, he caused her, though a matron of seventy, to be frightfully tortured for several days; then she was placed on a camel and led for shame through the camp. Finally, she was tied to the tail of a wild horse and dragged to death: the hoofs of the horse crushed the limbs of the sinful queen into a shapeless mass. I know of no poem in the whole range of German literature which gives a more ghastly picture of that realistic scene of atrocity than one in which Ferdinand Freiligrath relates:

"How once in the fields of the river Marne near Châlons
Chlotar, the son of Chilperic, had the sinful Brunehild
Tied by her silver hair to a wild stallion;
To drag her galloping through the Frankish camp.
The neighing stallion started, and the hind hoofs struck
The aged form, breaking and wrenching limb from limb.
Dishevelled flew her whitened hair about her bloody brow.
The pointed pebbles drank her royal blood; and shuddering
Beheld the blood-accustomed Franks the horror of the judgment
Of their wrathful king Chlotar.
The glow of the red fires burning before every tent
Fell ghastly on the pain-distorted countenance.
With icy shower now the Marne washed from it the dust.
The camel which had borne her through the ranks was spattered
with her blood. . . ."

(H. S.)

We gladly leave the chapter of the Frankish nation under the Merovingians, for it is stained with the uninterrupted tragedy of brutal superstition, lust, perjury, treason, incest, murder of the closest blood relatives, malice,

and cruelty. Such scenes as the Langobard Alboin's deeds and death, Brunehild's end, and the countless unspeakable vices mentioned by Bishop Gregory of Tours demonstrate sufficiently the terrible corruption of which even the best races are capable, when released from all the bonds of legal restraint in the time of peace, and when torn, root and branch, from a healthy native soil.

Even more characteristic is perhaps the poetic literature of the time, in which the unnatural vices are transformed and reflected as lofty virtues. What is the historian of culture to say when the contemporary presbyter and bishop, the pious poet, Venantius Fortunatus, glorifies and elevates both Brunehild and Fredegond as mirrors of virtue and grace? The latter, the slave girl who attained the crown through murder and prostitution, is to him the queen "who adorns the realm by her virtues. Wise in council, skilful, provident, useful to the Court; powerful of mind, magnanimous, excelling in all merits." Brunehild, on the other hand, "The ethereal Brunehild, shining more brilliantly than the stars, surpasses the light of the gems by the light of her countenance of milk and blood. The lilies mixed with roses cannot compare with her. She is a sapphire, a white diamond, a crystal, an emerald, a iaspis, nay, more, for all must yield the palm to her; Spain [referring to the Visigoths having occupied southern France and northern Spain] has produced a new jewel."

Chapter III

The Years of the Wanderings

III

THE YEARS OF THE WANDERINGS, AS REFLECTED IN THE FIRST PERIOD OF BLOOM OF GERMAN LITERATURE (1100–1300)

THE literary remnants of the pre-Carlovingian era are too scanty to permit us to form from them a perfect picture of Teutonic woman during the centuries of migrations. We are, however, able fairly to reconstruct the record by the aid of the rich treasures transmitted to us from a period five or six centuries later, a time epochal in the stormy youth of the German peoples. Though the original songs were partly destroyed through the antagonism of the Church and her efforts to root out the pagan memories and traditions, and, though these causes, to a large extent, made futile the strenuous efforts of Charlemagne to collect and preserve the ancient lays and sagas, the people continued to be influenced by their memories. The spirit of the "Legend from Ancient Times," of which Heine writes in his beautiful poem, *Lorelei,* never died out in the soul of the race. The spirit of expansion, of enlargement of horizon, fostered by the crusades and by the broad policy of the great Hohenstaufen dynasty brought about an extensive knowledge of the poetic, romantic, and historic materials and forms among the older French and Italian literatures. The old heroes of the German legend and history awakened from the long slumber of

vague recollection and lived again in their influence upon the ideals of the people. The origin of the German heroic epic is thus closely connected with the most decisive period of the political birth of the nation. The heroic epic in its entirety, therefore, flows from, and is reflected in, the great revolution of power and in the changes of habitation which, for the first time, awakened the historical self-consciousness of the German war nobility and made possible a new development in the national literature. The hour of birth of the German heroic epic is the Migration period. In the heroic epic the story is clothed in a romantic garment. The epic poets, looking backward from their own stirring times as far as the formation period, symbolize the progress of history in the time when it may be said that ancient Europe was broken to pieces, and the Germans in a new formation and in a new soil came uninjured and even strengthened from the general devastation.

The type of heroes and heroines formed in the fifth and sixth centuries, and the heroes grown and developed from those ancient, yet largely mythological ideas and ideals were adapted to the new type of chivalrous manhood of the eleventh and twelfth centuries by the poets and singers of the circles of the princes and nobles whose high culture promoted the first classical period of bloom. The heroic saga is then the crystallization of the treasure of traditions formed in the heroic period of the race.

The saga material is divisible into the group or tribal cycles, and every cycle revolves around a galaxy of great, good, heroic, or evil women. This saga literature, in fact, furnishes us with a perfect portrait gallery of the German women of the two most important and formative periods of their race. We have mentioned in the previous chapter

a few of the Hunnish cycle around Attila (Etzel). Of these Ildico and Hildegund are preëminent. We have alluded to the historical women of the Ostrogoth cycle—those associated with the great Theodoric or, as called in the saga, Dietrich von Bern (Verona). Other cycles there are: the Norse, embracing Beowulf, King of the Jutes, and the Scandinavian heroes Wittich and Wieland, belongs to our theme but incidentally; the Langobard cycle, singing the Langobard heroes King Rother, Ortnit, Hugdietrich, and Wolfdietrich, and their adventures on the Mediterranean Sea and in a legendary Byzantine Empire, with a type of Oriental-Greek or Byzantine women, lies a little aside from our present consideration of German women. We can well confine ourselves to the *Nibelungen Saga* and *Gudrun,* the German *Iliad* and *Odyssey,* for these two heroic sagas of the German nation are the true exponents of all the characteristics of German women and men. The heroic epic in its germ is historical, but its growth freed it from its fetters of fact and decked it with ornaments from the domain of imagination. Historical and mythical elements are, then, strangely blended in these sagas. They develop exotically, scarce one that does not grow outside its original sphere, assimilate foreign unhistorical matter, blur all chronology, and anachronistically poetize the dim recollections of a historical but long-forgotten underground. The resultant of the convolutions and accretions is a complex epic cycle of sagas originating at different times, but always deeply rooted in the Migration period, wherein lay all the origins of Germanic historical existence.

The *Nibelungenlied* is the crystallization of the Burgundian—Low Rhenish—Hunnish cycle of Sagas. No more complete psychological record in poetic form of all the emotions, love and hate, vice and virtue, vanity and modesty,

chastity and passion, piety and wickedness, womanly gentleness and virulence, is imaginable. All the phases of human existence are put before us in the lives of the Burgundian royal brothers Gunther, Gernot, Giselher; their mother Ute; and their sister Kriemhilde, whose character, as outlined, is the grandest and the most complex woman's character in the literature of the world. Kriemhilde, as the wife of the Low Rhenish hero Siegfried, and Brunhild, in the Norse version of the Saga, a former Valkyrie, humanized only to make it possible for her to be the wife of Gunther and to bear a deep love for Siegfried, are the opposite poles of womanhood.

It is, however, very difficult to obtain through the epics a correct estimate of the status of woman at a definite period. This difficulty is due not only to the poetic and fictitious characterization of the womanly types, but especially to the constant blending of ancient Germanic elements and twelfth century chivalry, knighthood, and romantic love (*Minne*), from which results an almost inextricable web of mythical and historical and purely romantic threads.

Siegfried wins Kriemhilde by a long wooing in the truly romantic fashion of the period of *Minne* song, but later inflicts upon her, in the truly old Germanic fashion, a severe physical chastisement for her quarrelsome temper. We find in the story traces of the primeval Germanic beliefs of the power of divination and prophecy. Kriemhilde has a momentous dream; she sees a beautiful falcon that she had reared with care seized and overpowered by two eagles. Her mother, Ute, interprets the dream correctly as foreshadowing the fate of her future husband:

> "The falcon, whom thou cherished, he was a noble man,
> May God in safety keep him, for no one other can."

In the morning before the final catastrophe overtook Siegfried, Kriemhilde related to him with a sorrowful heart another dream:

> "I dreamed last night of trouble, and how that two wild boar
> Chased you thro' the thicket,—then were the flowers red.
> That I must weep so sorely, in sooth! I have full need."

The magic arts and the cutting of runes by women are no longer mentioned in the greatest epic of the Middle High German period, while they are yet in full sway in the Norse version of Sigurd and Brunhild, or, as she is there called, Sigrdrifa. The gift of healing, however, is attributed to women in both versions.

As we have seen in ancient Germanic law, woman is under the guardianship, or *Mundium* (hand), of her nearest male relatives. So she is at the period of the *Nibelungenlied*. Of Kriemhilde it is said:

> "Her guardians were three kings, rich and of noble race . . .
> The maiden was their sister; the princes had her in ward."

Noble women resided usually in the inner secluded rooms, called *kemenate*. Siegfried did not see Kriemhilde at the Burgundian court for a whole year. Her favorite occupation in her seclusion was to embroider gold and jewels on silk, fashioning splendid garments for the bridal expeditions and courtly travels of the heroes. Rarely, and only on festal occasions, women appeared to receive distinguished guests. Then they are surrounded by their attendant warriors, who—as a symbol of ready protection —carry swords in their hands. Any offence to a noblewoman is taken up by her entire following and is expiated in bloody fashion. Marriage by capture no longer occurs, yet traces of it can be found everywhere in the later bridal expeditions of Gunther and the Hegelings. On the battlefield, Siegfried pays no gold for his bride, it is true, but he

has to earn her in a hard struggle against the enemies of her three brothers.

The lot of woman is suffering and sorrow and care, as evidenced from such verses as:

> "Whatever sufferings fall to the lot of the men,
> All those are wept over by the women."

This is the tenor of all the epic songs. The *Nibelungenlied* has devoted an epilogue, *The Lamentation*, to the expression of those sentiments. There are constant allusions to woman's woes: here, the death of a hero is "lamented by many a woman;" there, "heavy heartache harasses the women;" "all the worthy women weep over him."

We may, after this brief introduction, consider the great characters of the lay. A peculiar position in the Germanic heroic epic is occupied by Helche, King Attila's first consort. Although a pagan, the conception left to us of the wife of the dread Hunnish king is of a woman who has become almost entirely Germanized. Because of her traits of mildness, kindness, and purity, she appears as the ideal of a true German queen, just as Attila himself, with his Germanized name (*attila,* little father, from Gothic *atta,* father), appears in many lays as a good, liberal, kind-hearted king. Helche is especially motherly toward the numerous noblewomen who stay at the Hunnish court as hostages; she is a friend of the conquered and the helper of the miserable and the exiled. Dietrich von Bern, in his exile from home and throne, is under her protection. She obtained for him from Etzel money and men for the reconquest of Bern; and when the enterprise failed, she intervened for him with the irate Hunnish king, and even gave him her sister's daughter in marriage. When the king complained of the obnoxious foreign fugitives, she convinced him that the reception of a hero like Dietrich could only be

of advantage to his realm and an honor to himself. At the death of Helche there is universal mourning throughout the land; for, says the chronicler, a true mother of the innocent virgins and of the entire people has departed.

In the foreground of all the epics of the German cycles stand the two greatest characters of ancient womanhood, Kriemhilde and Brunhild.

At Worms on the Rhine in the land of the Burgundians, the three royal brothers Gunther, Gernot, and Giselher guard a glorious treasure, Princess Kriemhilde. Many kings and heroes try to win her hand, but she is indifferent to the love of men. The most glorious hero of the age, Siegfried, hears the fame of Kriemhilde's beauty and proceeds with a numerous and splendid retinue from his royal father's castle at Xanten up the Rhine to Worms to win Kriemhilde. After a six days' sail, Siegfried and his escort reach their destination, and without disclosing their identity they ride to court. Only Hagen of Tronje is able to give information to the Burgundians regarding the strange heroes. He relates how Siegfried, in spite of his youth, has already accomplished great exploits, how he slew the dragon and became invulnerable by bathing in the blood of the monster, how he defeated the Nibelungs and seized their immense treasure. Hagen exhorts Gunther to receive the youthful hero with kindness and honor in order that he may not "earn the hatred of the bold prince."

Hagen's advice is followed and Siegfried is received by the Burgundians with great honor. But before he is permitted even to look upon the beautiful Kriemhilde, he is invited to aid the Burgundians in reducing to subjection the rebellious kings Lüdeger of Saxony and Lüdegast of Denmark. Upon his triumphal return from the war his eyes are gladdened by the sight of the royal maid at the festive celebration of the victory. The princess attended

by a hundred sword-bearing chamberlains and a hundred richly adorned gentlewomen, steps forth from her *kemenate,* or as says the lay:

"Then came the lovely one, as does the rosy morn
Through sombre clouds advancing . . .
As the bright Queen of heaven steps forth before each star
Above the clouds high soaring, in shine so pure and clear,
So shone the beauteous maiden o'er other ladies nigh."

The very first glance exchanged between the princess and the prince betrays their mutual love. Siegfried is more than ever resolved to win the beauteous maiden for his wife.

But the time of trial is not yet over for him. King Gunther has set his heart upon the war maid Brunhild, Queen of the Isenstein, and he is determined to win her as his wife. Siegfried's presence seems to offer a favorable opportunity to press his suit; he therefore agrees that if the hero from the Netherlands will help him to obtain the hand of Brunhild, he may marry Kriemhilde. With a heavy heart—for well he knows Brunhild—Siegfried consents. Accompanied by but a few warriors, Gunther and Siegfried sail down the Rhine, and after a twelve days' journey they land on Isenstein. In sight of the royal castle, surmounted by eighty-six towers rising in gloomy magnificence, Siegfried, in order to pass for a vassal, holds the stirrup of Gunther. Brunhild receives the dragon slayer, whose fame and glory are well known to her, with the words:

"'Welcome you are, Sir Siegfried, here to this my land.
What means your journey hither, now let me understand?'"
Quoth Siegfried: 'Lady Brunhild, great thanks to you I owe,
That you, most gentle princess, should deign to greet me so
Before this noble hero who stands beside me here;
For he is my master . . .
He is by name Gunther, a mighty King and dread;
If he your love can conquer, his fondest wish is sped.'"

Brunhild proclaims the conditions upon which she may be won. The hero who wishes to win her to wife must conquer her in three games: spear throwing, stone throwing, and leaping. If he fails in one of the three tests he must lose his head. Gunther declares himself ready for the trial—though he feels that his strength is not equal to the superhuman power of Brunhild. Siegfried comes to his friend's assistance, and clad in his *Tarn-cap* which he had won from the Nibelung treasure, and which makes him invisible, he undertakes the task while Gunther merely executes the gesture of the action. Brunhild is defeated and with forebodings of evil follows the Burgundian king to Worms where a joyful double marriage is celebrated. Then Siegfried takes his bride to Xanten, his capital, where he passes ten years of peace and happiness. But the Norns, the Fates, have decreed that his joy shall not endure. King Gunther invites his friend and his sister to a great festival at Worms at the time of the summer solstice. On the eleventh day before Vespers, during the walk to church, a fatal quarrel breaks out between the queens. The quarrel is precipitated by a question of precedence. Brunhild, consumed by jealousy of Siegfried's heroic fame and Kriemhilde's happiness, insultingly taunts the latter that her consort is after all but a vassal of Gunther, an accusation which Kriemhilde violently rejects. The two queens part with vehement words. Kriemhilde threatens:

> "'Since thou hast my Siegfried claimed as thy subject now,
> So shall this very day the knights of both kings see,
> Whether, before the Queen, the church I enter may.'"

Arrived at the same moment at the entrance to the church, Brunhild calls out to her sister-in-law:

> "'Before wife of a monarch, a subject shall not go.'"

Kriemhilde, forgetting herself and all about her, breaks out in terrible passion:

"'Couldst thou have kept silent, 't would have been for thy good.
Thou hast thyself dishonored thine own body fair;
How could a concubine as a king's wife appear?'
'Whom wouldst thou a concubine?' speaks the haughty Queen.
'That will I thee,' quoth Kriemhild; 'thy body fair, I ween,
Was at first embraced by Siegfried, my dear man;
'Sooth was it not my brother who thy maidenhood won.'"

In the agony of shame, Brunhild sank with tears on the threshold. Kriemhilde passes through the door of the church with her attendants, but

"For this must soon perish many knights, brave and good."

The insulted queen swears vengeance; Siegfried's blood alone can wash away her shame. Here begins the work of fierce, grim Hagen, one of the most sombre characters in German legend. Brunhild wins for the execution of her revenge this knight, with his fearful record of crime and passion, though with, on the other hand, his tragic greatness and his unfaltering devotion to his king and master, to whom he is joined by the ties of absolute loyalty. As justified by his oath of vassalage he vows to slay the man who has insulted his sovereign. Gunther reluctantly consents to the murder of the man to whom he is so deeply indebted; Giselher, who decidedly rejects the murderous project, is outvoted.

A treacherous plan is concocted, and—to make the perfidy still more flagrant—Kriemhilde's innocent coöperation is mendaciously engaged. As Siegfried, after his bath in the blood of the dragon whom he had slain, is invulnerable except at one point between the shoulder-blades where a fallen linden leaf had prevented the skin from becoming "horny," Kriemhilde is persuaded by Hagen to mark the

spot with red silk that he may protect him from harm. A hunt is chosen as the occasion for Siegfried's murder. While Siegfried stoops to a fountain to drink the limpid water, wine having intentionally been kept away from the hunting party, he is pierced by Gunther's vassal through the silken mark indicated by his innocent, loving wife. He sinks to the ground dying, rallies once more to face his murderer, but his strength leaves him, and dying he commends Kriemhilde to Gunther's care:

> "'Would you ever, Gunther, on this world again
> To any one show kindness, let it well appear,
> In truth and in favor, to my wife so dear.
> Let it at least speak for her that she your sister is:
> By every princely virtue, pledge your troth in this.'"

The murderer causes Siegfried's corpse to be laid before the door of his sleeping queen. When leaving her chamber in the morning to go to early mass, Kriemhilde fainted on viewing the heartrending sight—

> "She sank down on the ground, no word more did she say;
> The lovely, joyless lady before them prostrate lay.
> Kriemhild's anguish was terrible to view,
> So loud her cries and wailing that the room echoed through."

The body of the divine hero is laid on a bier in the cathedral. Then Kriemhilde challenges the king and Hagen to approach the shrine containing Siegfried's corpse and take the test that will decide their guilt or innocence. The ancient ordeal reveals the murderer, for at Hagen's approach the wound begins to bleed anew. In Kriemhilde's soul, that heretofore had been so filled with unspeakable love for her incomparable hero that other passions found no place, there arises now an all-destroying hatred and lust of revenge. The expression of this pervades the second part of the *Nibelungenlied,* and reaches its climax in

an orgy of blood, in a cataclysm that overwhelms alike all the participants in the murder,—her brothers and herself.

Kriemhilde secludes herself at Worms, and mourns her dead for thirteen long years. During all this weary time no single word is addressed by her to Gunther—her blood-stained brother. The silence becomes intolerable; and to reconcile her and to divert her thoughts, the kings send for the Nibelung treasure of red gold and precious jewels which lies under dwarf Alberich's guard in the land of the Nibelungs. During four days and nights twelve heavy wagons haul the shining treasure from the hollow of the mountain to the waiting ship. A truce is patched up between the widow and the brothers, but she hates Hagen with a deep and silent hate. Her only consolation lies in charity toward the poor. Hagen fears the effect of her liberality. He takes the treasure away from her and thus adds further to her debt of hate. Upon Gernot's advice, Hagen sinks the Nibelung hoard in the Rhine, at a place between Worms and Lorsch, and there it rests, according to popular belief, to this very day. Those who knew where it rested swore solemnly never to betray its hiding place, and not one of those who knew survived Kriemhilde's hate. Nemesis now passes from Siegfried the Nibelung to the Burgundian Nibelungs. The Nibelungs' distress (*Not*) begins with the second part of the national epic.

Far away in Hungary, Etzel had lost his wife, Helche, the song-famed queen. Fair Kriemhilde is proposed to him, and, after some doubts whether he should wed a Christian, he is persuaded by his great vassal Rüdiger of Bechlarn to undertake the wooing. Rüdiger himself is sent on the errand, and proceeds from the Etzel castle to Bechlarn, in Austria, where he is heartily received by his faithful wife, Gotelinde, and his blooming daughter. Gotelinde is deeply affected by the death of the good and noble Helche, and

by the thought that she is to be replaced by another wife. At last the envoy arrives at Worms, where Hagen alone recognizes the hero with whom and Walthari of Aquitaine he had once associated at Etzel's court. The kings are not averse to the proposal of marriage, but Hagen, conscious of the irretrievable wrong which he had inflicted upon the queen and apprehensive of the effect of her independence and power, dissuades them: "You do not know Etzel; if you knew him, you would reject his wooing, even though Kriemhilde might accept; it may turn out disastrously to you." Gunther replies: "Friend Hagen, thou mayst not render loyalty; repair by kindly consent to Kriemhilde's happiness the sorrow which thou hast caused to her." But Hagen is unmoved: "If Kriemhilde wears Helche's crown, she will inflict upon us as much sorrow and distress as she will be able to. It becomes heroes to avoid harm."

This anticipation of horror, this foreboding of dreadful evil, continues throughout the lay, until the measure of woe is full. The kings are unconscious of the dark clouds gathering above their heads, but Hagen, in spite of his ferocious bravery, seems, though defiant throughout, to be pursued by Nemesis of the Furies. When Kriemhilde is informed of Etzel's wooing, she replies mournfully: "God forbid you to mock me, poor wretched woman. What shall I be to a man who has already won love from a good wife?"

Heartrending lamentations for the unforgotten and still beloved Siegfried break from the queen. To Rüdiger, Etzel's envoy, she states: "He who knows my sharp pain will not ask me to love another man. I lost more in the one than any woman can ever gain." Still, she asks time for deliberation. Gernot and Giselher encourage her: "If anyone can reverse your sorrow, the man is

Etzel; from the Rhône to the Rhine, from the Elbe to the sea, no king is powerful as he; rejoice that he has chosen thee for his partner in his glorious realm." "Woe is me, lamentation and mourning beseem me better than marriage; I can no longer go to court as befits a queen; if once I was beautiful, my beauty has vanished long ago." With dry eyes, in bitter pain, she awaits the morning. Nothing can move her to consent. At last, Rüdiger vows to her under four eyes with a solemn oath: "And though you had in Hunland no one but me and my loyal kinsman and warriors, still anyone who causes sorrow to you, shall heavily atone for it by my hand." Instantly all the spirits of revenge are aroused in her breast; but Rüdiger knows not the terrible thoughts that linger in her bosom, as he swears the solemn oath; he knows not that by his oath he dooms his child, his men, himself to a double death. Kriemhilde, with her heart thirsting for revenge, proceeds with the embassy to Etzel's court. Twenty-four mighty kings and princes are sent by her great husband to meet her. Attila's brother, Blödel, renders her homage; and so, too, does Havart, the Dane, and his faithful vassal, Iring, and of others a host. And there she notices, at the head of his men, whose faces shine forth defiantly from their wolf's helmets, a lofty, almost gigantic hero—a lion-like man with his powerful shoulders and loins, cast as of iron; he resembles Siegfried in bright looks and royal brow; but in him Siegfried's serene youth is mellowed to manly maturity. Heavy storms have raged over the head of the hero, whose hair is bound with a regal diadem, whose right arm leans upon his lion shield. This is Theodoric the Goth, Dietrich von Bern of the saga, the greatest hero of the Migration period, next to Siegfried the centre of Teutonic epic, now an exile at Etzel's court until he returns as a victor to the dominions of his fathers.

The strength and majesty of this heroic warrior appeal to the heart of Kriemhilde, but appeal only as the means to the accomplishment of sure revenge on the murderers of her husband, Siegfried. The marriage feast is celebrated at Vienna for seventeen days with profuse magnificence and numberless gifts to the bride; but Kriemhilde's heart is faithful to her first and only love.

"When now the thought would cross her how by the Rhine she sat
Beside her noble husband, with tears her eyes were wet;
Yet must she weep in secret that it by none was seen."

Thus she proceeds sadly down the Danube to the Etzel castle, a stranger in a strange land—concealing her deep woe under her royal splendor. After seven years she bears to Etzel a son, Ortlieb, then six years more pass by—twenty-six years in all since Siegfried was murdered at the linden fountain in the Oden forest—then at last the time arrives to quench the thirst of her revenge.

Kriemhilde says to Etzel: "For long years I have now been here in a strange land, and no one of my lofty kinsmen has visited us. No longer may I bear the absence from my relatives, for already the rumor goes here, since no one of my family visits us, that I am an exile and a fugitive from my land, without home or friends." The king, ever ready to please Kriemhilde, sends the two singer-heroes, Werbel and Swemlin, to Worms as envoys to invite the Burgundian kings with their suite to visit Hungary at the next solstice. Kriemhilde urges *all* her relatives to come. The ever suspicious Hagen dissuades the kings from the journey. "You know indeed what we have done to Kriemhilde, that I with my own hand slew her husband. How can we dare to travel in Etzel's land? There we shall lose life and honor—King Etzel's wife is of long revenge!" When his warning fails, he advises that

the expedition shall be strongly armed and of large numbers. All the vassals are summoned, and eleven thousand men go joyfully forth on their dire mission. The element of music and song is not wanting; brave, cheerful Volker, the fiddler, an expert singer and musician as well as a great warrior, is of the party.

Kriemhilde is informed of the success of the mission, and voices her grim joy: "How are you pleased with the good tidings, dear husband and master; what I have desired ever and ever is now fulfilled." "Your will is mine," replied Etzel; "I never rejoiced thus over the arrival of my own relatives as I do over the arrival of yours."

An ill omen almost prevents the fateful expedition. The hoary mother of the Burgundian Kings and of Kriemhilde dreams, during the preparations for departure, that all the birds in the land lie scattered dead on the fields and groves. Hagen realizes the purport of the dream; but when scorned by Gernot, he says: "It is not fear that moves me; if you order the journey, I shall ride gladly to Etzel's land."

The journey is full of adventures and novel experiences; Hagen, because he is well versed in the intricate roads, is the leader; his adventure with the mermaid-prophetesses is recorded in the first episode. Out of the rustling water the ominous voice of the swan-virgin is heard: "Hagen, Aldrian's son, I will warn thee. Return, as long as it is time yet; no one of your great host will return across the Danube, but one man, the king's chaplain." Hagen fights with the ferryman, whom he found, according to the warning of the mermaids, untrustworthy. He slays him and hurls the corpse into the flood, but, though this is done, the kings still see his blood streaming in the ship. Hagen himself ferries the entire army over the stream. On the last boat rides the chaplain. Him Hagen seizes, as he leans with his hand on the sanctuary, and hurls him

pitilessly beneath the surface of the rippling water. The chaplain then turns and safely reaches the home bank; as he shakes in his dripping garments, he sees the Burgundians file into the distance. The first prophecy is fulfilled, and Hagen now realizes the irretrievable doom that awaits the kings and their followers. He destroys the ship, knowing well that it will serve for no one's safe return from the land of the Huns; but he justifies the act as a means of preventing retreat if a coward sought to gain safety by flight.

The description of the hospitality afforded to the Burgundians by Margrave Rüdiger of Bechlarn, in Austria, is a classical account of German court life. In it are welded together the customs and manners both of the migration period and the transition period between the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. In the noble hostesses, Rüdiger's wife, Gotelinde, and Dietlinde, her lovely daughter, are depicted true types of the loftiest German womanhood. The royal housewife receives the guests in true German fashion, with a kiss, thus honoring the brothers of her queen. The lovely maiden, too, proceeds along the ranks of the king's suite, offering them the kiss of welcome; but, with the intuitive soul of a pure German woman, she shudders before Hagen's grim features, and only in obedience to her father's order she offers to him her pale cheek for a kiss. There is hardly in any literature such a charming illustration of the joyous nature of a people, as shown in their customs and pleasures and music, as the banquet given by Rüdiger. Good cheer prevails at the joyful table over which presided the noble and hospitable Gotelinde. During the afternoon, the daughter of the house appears with her companions to inspire Volker to song and merry jest. The climax of the scene is reached when the Burgundian heroes woo lovely Dietlinde for the

youngest of their kings, Giselher. The suit is accepted by the parents, and the betrothal of the noble couple is concluded amid joyful consent and pleasurable anticipation of the marriage, which is to be celebrated when the Burgundians return from Etzel's court. When the hour of parting approaches, precious gifts are exchanged in truly Homeric fashion as a symbol of intimate connection and eternal friendship. Rüdiger presents Gernot with his own sword, which he had gloriously wielded in many a battle. The last blow of the glorious, but ill-fated, sword is, alas! to cleave the head of noble Rüdiger himself. Gotelinde honors Hagen with the shield of her own father, who had fallen in battle.

Dietrich, the hero, first receives the Burgundians on Hunnish soil: "Be welcome, Gunther, Gernot, and Giselher; be welcome, Hagen, Volker, and Dankwart; are you unaware that Kriemhilde still grievously weeps for the hero from the Nibelung land?" "May she weep—weep yet for a long time: he has been slain many years ago; Siegfried will never return; may she cling to the King of the Huns," is Hagen's grimly defiant reply. "How Siegfried fell we will not now investigate: but so long as Kriemhilde lives, grievous calamity is impending; do thou beware of it most of all, O Hagen, heir of the Nibelungs." Still more definitely Dietrich expresses his fears to the Burgundian kings in secret interview; though unaware of a determined plot of revenge, he knows that Etzel's wife raises every morning her loud dirge to mighty God for strong Siegfried's direful death. "It cannot now be helped," replies the brave fiddler Volker; "let us ride to Etzel's court and await what is destined to us by the Huns."

When the eagle helmets and coats of arms of the Burgundians gleam at the gate entrance to the castle, Kriemhilde

exclaims: "There are my relatives; let him who loves me be mindful of my sorrow." The heroes are received at Etzel's castle with barbarous splendor, yet a terrible gloom seems to overhang everything. Hagen and Volker, in the consciousness that death is near, join each other in a personal compact for life and death. They seat themselves outside on a stone bench, and are looked at with fear and awe. When Kriemhilde sees from the window her deadly enemy, she is overcome by emotion, her tears flow, and she calls upon her royal vassals around her to avenge her bitter woe and sorrow on Hagen, the murderer of Siegfried. Sixty men buckle on their armor. Kriemhilde herself, with the royal crown on her head, descends to the courtyard to obtain from Hagen's own lips the confession of his deed as a testimony for her men. "I know," she says, "he is so haughty, he will not deny it, so I do not care what happens to him for the deed." While the sixty hostile warriors approach, the two Burgundian heroes once more renew their bond for life and death. To Hagen's question whether Volker will stand by him "in true love as I shall never forsake you," Volker replies: "So long as I live, even though all Hunnish knights storm against us I do not yield from you, Hagen, not a finger's breadth." "Now God reward you, noble Volker, what more do I need? Let them approach, the armored heroes!" This splendid monument of German loyalty partially reconciles us to the horrors soon to be enacted.

Kriemhilde then approaches the terrible pair. Though Volker prompts his comrade to rise before the queen, Hagen defiantly remains seated, and lays before him on his knees a shining sword with a brilliant jewel of green color on the handle. Kriemhilde at once recognizes Siegfried's saga-famed sword Balmung. Her grief is thus

renewed. "Who bade you come, Hagen, how could you dare to ride hither? Do you not know what you have done to me?"

"No one sent for me; three kings have been invited hither, they are my masters, I their vassal; where they are, I am."

"You know indeed," continued Kriemhilde, "why I detest you? You have slain Siegfried, and for him I shall weep to the very end."

"Yes," snarled grim Hagen, "I did slay Siegfried, the hero, because Lady Kriemhilde chided fair Brunhild, my queen. Avenge it whoever will, I confess, I caused you much sorrow." Thereupon, war is declared for life and death. However, the sixty Hunnish heroes do not dare to attack the two Burgundians, who rise and go to the royal hall in order that they may stand by their kings should they be in distress.

Kriemhilde enters and salutes her brothers, but bestows a kiss and handshake only on Giselher, the youngest. Hagen ties his helmet more tightly. Kriemhilde inquires whether they had brought her property, the Nibelung treasure, with them.

"The Nibelung treasure," replies Hagen scornfully, "has been buried in the deepest Rhine where it shall lie till the last day, and

> "'To thee I bring the devil!
> In this my buckler have I quite enough to bear,
> And also in my armor—this helm so fairly wrought—
> This sword my hand is holding; therefore I bring thee naught.'"

Kriemhilde requests the Burgundians to give up their arms, as is customary, at friendly visits; Hagen refuses. She thus realizes that the Burgundians must have been warned.

"Who has done this?" she inquires angrily. Proudly and firmly Dietrich replies: "It is I, I have warned them; on me, thou, terrible one, wilt not avenge this warning." Before his piercing eye Kriemhilde conceals her boiling anger and retreats, throwing hostile glances upon her enemies. The guests, too, retire guarded by the indefatigable Hagen and Volker. For the last time, Volker's music rings out into the night as he sings in sweet melodies the parting from life. It is the dirge for the Burgundian kings and heroes. Kriemhilde vainly endeavors to enlist Hildebrand and Dietrich to aid her revenge. Both refuse.

"He who will slay the Nibelungs will do it without me," says Hildebrand. Nor will Dietrich break faith to those who came in good faith and from whom he had suffered no harm. He says: "By my hand Siegfried will remain unavenged."

At last the queen by great promises wins Blödel, Etzel's brother. He agrees to attack the lesser knights and the men-at-arms who under Dankwart's command rest in the outhouses. During the surprise, Kriemhilde quietly enters the dining hall of the royal castle where the great heroes are already assembled. Her son Ortlieb, only five years old, is presented by Etzel to his uncles and their favor is bespoken when the prince shall be sent to Burgundy for his education. Now the untamed fury of Hagen suddenly breaks out in a fearful explosion. The fierce savagery of the Migration period, regardless of the Christian varnish of the thirteenth century, in striking contrast to the elegiac traits exhibited in the departure of the kings, in Giselher's betrothal to Dietlinde and voiced in Volker's sweet melodies, reappears in an unheard of act of brutal murder. Hagen exclaims that the young king does not look to him as if he would grow very old; that no one would ever see him in Ortlieb's court. While everybody

is yet stunned by the ferocious prophecy of the terrible man, Dankwart breaks into the festal hall and shouts:

"Why do you sit here so long, brother Hagen; to you and to God in heaven do I complain of our distress. Knights and servants lie altogether slain in the outhouse." Indeed, Blödel had kept his word, but lost his life in the attempt. Not one Burgundian escaped the carnage, save Dankwart who succeeded in cutting his way through the press. Hagen sprang up like a wounded lion, the sword shone in his mighty hand, and with one blow the head of the innocent royal child was tossed into the lap of his mother Kriemhilde. This atrocious deed is the signal for a universal carnage. In her deathly agony Kriemhilde appeals to Dietrich, who is at once ready to fulfil his duty toward the queen and consort of his host and protector, Etzel. Dietrich demands peace for himself and his men, who are no participants in the strife. King Gunther bids all go who are not involved in the murder of his men; he will take his revenge but on the retinue of Etzel who are in the plot. Etzel and Kriemhilde, Rüdiger of Bechlarn, Dietrich and his retinue, leave the hall. Then the battle began to rage again, until all Etzel's men were slain. Their bodies were hurled by the Burgundians downstairs in front of the door. Intoxicated by the victory, Hagen, in the doorway, reviles Kriemhilde for her second marriage, and the latter, exasperated, promises to fill Etzel's shield with gold for him who would bring her Hagen's head. It is not our task to describe here the battle, the blood flowing in rivulets from the hall to the courtyard. The attempt to obtain a free departure from the hall to die in open battle fails, since Kriemhilde fears Hagen might escape her vengeance. Yet even among those horrors a feature of love and truth is not missing. Giselher, who was hardly a boy when Siegfried was murdered, addresses his sister:

"O fair sister, how could I expect this great and dire calamity when thou invitedst me from the Rhine. How do I deserve death in this strange land? At all times was I true to thee, and never did I a wrong; I hoped to find thee loving and gracious to me; let me die quickly, if it must be!"

Deeply moved by his words, Kriemhilde demands only the surrender of Hagen. "As to you, I will let you live, for you are my brothers, and children of the same mother." But Gernot rejects the offer: "We die with Hagen, even though we were a thousand of the same race." And "We die with Hagen, if die we must," repeats Giselher; "we shall not forego loyalty unto death."

At the failure of this last attempt at peace, the wrath of Kriemhilde knows no bounds. She orders fire to be put to the hall, and the flames are fanned by the wind to a roaring shower of fire. A terrible thirst increases the torture, until the heroes quench it—according to Hagen's advice—with the blood of the slain. When the night sets in, the Burgundians protect themselves with their shields from the falling timbers. The last morning dawns. The battle rages anew. At last Rüdiger decides, though with a bleeding heart, that the loyalty to his king and queen, the faithfulness of the vassal, must prevail over his truth and love for his new friends, for Giselher, the betrothed of his child. In the ensuing struggle Rüdiger splits Gernot's head, while Gernot's last blow with Rüdiger's own sword ends the latter's life. Both heroes thus mingle their blood in death.

The bloody contest continues until all the Goths, with the exception of Hildebrand and Dietrich, are slain. In the royal hall, Gunther and Hagen alone stand over the bodies of their brothers and companions from Burgundy. Dietrich demands their surrender; the demand is rejected

by Hagen. The last terrible duel begins. Dietrich inflicts a severe wound upon Hagen, seizes him with his mighty arms, chains him in his lion's grasp, and thus delivers him to Kriemhilde. The same fate awaits Gunther. Recommending the lives of the heroes to Kriemhilde, Dietrich leaves the court.

Kriemhilde vows to Hagen that she will spare his life if he will return to her the hidden hoard, the Nibelung treasure. Though grievously wounded and lying in chains, Hagen, loyal to his masters, replies: "So long as one of my masters lives, I will not reveal the hiding place of the treasure." The queen is desperate. She causes her own royal brother's head to be cut off, and herself carries it by the hair to Hagen. The true vassal cries out with sad resolution: "Now it is accomplished as thou hast willed.—

> "'Dead is now of Burgundy the noble monarch true,
> Giselher, the young prince, and eke Gernot too.
> Of the Hoard knows no one save God and I alone;
> To thee, thou devil's wife, shall it ne'er be shown.'"

"Then only the sword of Siegfried, my sweet husband, is left to me." She draws it from the sheath, and, by the hand of the long-sorrowing wife, Siegfried's sword avenges Siegfried's death upon his murderer.

At this moment old Hildebrand, wrathful over the breach of the condition imposed upon her by Dietrich when he delivered Gunther and Hagen to her, cuts her down. Kriemhilde, with a frightful scream, sinks to the ground, beside the body of her deadly enemy.

> "With anguish thus had ended the monarch's revelry,
> As love will to sorrow too oft become a prey."—

Kriemhilde, the German woman *par excellence,* with her heart filled with all the virtues of love and faith, outraged

in her holiest feelings, and thus turning "the milk of human kindness to fermenting dragon's poison," presents to us all the potentialities of womanhood, and withal the entire range of the psychology of German womanhood.

When we emerge from the orgy of hate and bloodshed with which the second part of the *Nibelungenlied* is filled, when we have fathomed the depths of the passion of which a high-minded, loving type of royal womanhood such as Kriemhilde is capable, we are glad to resort to the beneficent contrast of womanly gentleness and loveliness which we find in *Gudrun,* the second great mediæval German epic, whose roots and branches are deeply set in the Migration period. We discover here a portrait of the culture of the time, its warfare, its seafaring, its discoveries, its geographical horizon, and, especially, its love and truth and faith. If we were stirred in the former epic by the gloomy and lurid background that overshadowed even its sunniest scenes; if the sinking of the noblest, purest, most affectionate Kriemhilde into demoniacal passion did not permit us to arrive at a serene contemplation of that gigantic work of art, we now celebrate the triumph of the loyalty and devotion and perseverance of a genuine womanly heart over long and bitter sorrow and humiliations. While Kriemhilde's fierce hatred immolates both herself and a great dynasty on the altar of revenge, in *Gudrun* we celebrate the victory of self-abnegation, patience, and peace, and the reconciliation of two mighty dynasties.

The theatre of action of this, the second greatest national epic, is the entire range of the North Sea, with its measureless limits extending into mythical infinity, with its long coast line and sea-girt isles, with its Viking ships storm-tossed on the watery roads of all the races. The

North Sea did not limit the sturdiness of the Teutonic seafarers of the Norse race, just as the Mediterranean did not restrain their energy and wandering instincts. As the Lombard cycle of sagas reaches out beyond the confines of the Teutonic world to Constantinople, to Syria, to Babylon, and to the mythical lands beyond the seas, so the cycle of the North leads us not only to the Netherlands, the land of the Frisians and Ditmarsch, but over to Seeland, Normandy, Ireland, even to the Orkneys, and perchance to Iceland.

And perhaps it may not be amiss, by way of contrast and to show the opposite poles of the Germanic world, to recount briefly an epic lay of the Lombard cycle which breathes quite a different atmosphere and exhibits different colors, geographically and morally speaking, from those of the North Sea. In the Lombard cycle there is a connection of the Teutonic cosmos with the fabulous Oriental world. King Ortnit of Lamparten (Lombardy) wins by a series of stratagems the resplendent daughter of the heathen king Nachaol, of Muntabur, in Syria, and makes her his wife. Descriptions of golden armor, magic rings, and rich treasures of the East betray everywhere the Oriental character of this Langobard legend.

More Germanic, though its sources lay entirely in the Byzantine Empire, is the saga of Hugdietrich with its moral of the all-pervading power of love. The names of the leading characters especially indicate the Teutonic setting of the saga. Hugdietrich is King of Constantinople, and, after the early death of his father, is reared by Duke Berchtung. At the age of twelve—an Oriental age for marriage—he consults with his guardian concerning the choice of a wife. The choice falls upon the fair maiden Hildeburg, daughter of King Walgund at Salnek (Saloniki); but this princess is confined in a lofty tower, for it has

been decided that she is never to marry. Unlike Danaë, the Greek beauty, who is reached in her solitary tower by the love of the Olympian Zeus in the form of a golden rain, Hildeburg receives Hugdietrich in a more satisfactory form. The young king—to attain his end—disguises himself in the garb of a maiden with flowing golden hair; he learns feminine arts, among them that of embroidery, and journeys to Salnek, accompanied by a numerous retinue. Here he represents himself as Hildegund, the exiled sister of the King of the Greeks, and is hospitably received by King Walgund. The false Hildegund quickly gains the favor of the royal couple of Salnek by her wonderful embroideries in gold and silver; and when her position at the court is assured, she requests the honor of becoming an attendant and playmate to Hildeburg. This granted, Hugdietrich is admitted to the tower of the captive princess. For twelve weeks, Hugdietrich plays his rôle and teaches his love the art of embroidery, but he is unable longer to restrain his passion, and he reveals himself to her. His love is reciprocated, and a blissful year is passed by the loving pair. At this juncture, Duke Berchtung arrives from Constantinople to conduct Hildegund home, since the king, her brother, wishes to receive her again into grace and brotherly affection. Hildeburg is left in painful longing and sadness. Soon afterward she gives birth to a son, whom she tries to conceal from the sight of men. One day, however, her mother surprises her by an unexpected visit; and the frightened nurse lets the babe, wrapped in silken cloths, down among the bushes of the ditch surrounding the castle. When, after the departure of the queen, the child is searched for, he is not to be found. A wolf has carried him away as food for his young. But King Walgund, who, as it happens, is out hunting, kills the wolves, and finds the child grievously weeping. The

king takes him under his mantle and brings him to his queen, calling him Wolfdietrich, as he had found him among the wolves. Hildeburg, too, sees him, and recognizes him as her own child by his birthmark, a red cross between his shoulders. She confesses everything to her parents, and is forgiven. Hugdietrich is sent for. He comes, recognizes the boy as his own, kisses him in truly Germanic fashion, wraps his golden mantle around him as a token of recognition, and pronounces the words:

> "'Wolfdietrich, O dearest child of mine,
> Constenople be the inheritance thine.'"

The sagas of the Lombard cycle are the poetic crystallization of the spread of Teutonism over the world of the Orient; they symbolize the national thirst for adventure and strife.

We now turn back from the extreme southeast of Europe to the extreme northwest of that continent, the ideal realm of Gudrun, the noblest type of German womanhood in the domain of German literature.

King Hagen of Ireland, and Hilde, his wife, have a beautiful daughter, also called Hilde. But the king "grudges her to any man who is not over him," and has her suitors slain, for no one is his equal. The fame of Hilde's beauty penetrates also to the coast of the German North Sea, and King Hettel of the Hegelings desires her for his wife. Five great vassals of the king, Wate of Stormland (Holstein), the great hero and singer, Frute, Horant of Denmark, Morung of Nifland, and Irolt of Ortland, set out to win the cherished bride for their king. Seven hundred warriors are hidden in the hold of the great ship built of cypress wood, covered with silver plate, and brave in golden rudders, silken sails, and anchors forged from silver. The stratagem devised by the suitors lies in the tale by which

they will inform King Hagen that they were driven out by Hettel, the tyrannical king, and that, being merchants, they carried away their treasures on their flight to Ireland. By exceedingly rich presents, they win the good will of Hagen and especially that of young Hilde, who persuades her father to admit them to the court. Horant delights all by his Orphean music, "so enchanting that his melodies pierced the heart, and the little birds stopped singing before his divine harmonies."

> "The beasts of the forest forsook the fresh pasture,
> The beetle forgot to crawl on through the green grass,
> The fish fond of shooting through the waves of the waters
> Arrested their path. Truly, Horant could boast of his art."

Young Hilde's delight in his music prompts her to invite the sweet singer to her chamber, where he sings enchantingly; one of his lays tells of the mermaids, and this leads up to the story of the suit of his royal master. The princess consents to accept the suit, if Horant will promise to sing for her every morning and every night. The hero endowed with the divine art of song entices her still further by telling her that at the royal court there are twelve minstrels greatly superior to himself, the greatest and most musical of all is King Hettel himself. Hilde is then invited to visit the ship and see the treasures thereon. On the fourth day, under the pretext that their king has called them back and makes them amends, the visiting heroes take leave of Hagen. At parting Hagen is requested to pay them a visit with his queen. While the king and the queen are walking upon the strand, young Hilde with her women step upon the ship. Immediately the anchors are hoisted, the sails are unfurled, and the ship shoots through the waves like an arrow. Hagen's ships have shrewdly been made unseaworthy by the cunning Hegelings, who

joyfully proceed homeward with their fair booty and land at Wales, the western boundary of Hettel's domains, where they are royally received by the overjoyed king. A brilliant festival is celebrated; in silken tents covered with flowers the heroes surround Hettel's beauteous bride. But before sunset the scene changes to a bloody *Wahlstatt*. King Hagen arms other ships and pursues the captors of his daughter. A terrible battle ensues on the strand of Wales. Lightning sparkles from the golden helmets, the spears fly like snowflakes in a northern winter. Hettel is wounded by Hagen, Hagen by Wate. As once at the very cradle of the Roman Republic, the Sabine spouses saved their Roman husbands from annihilation at the hands of their Sabine fathers and brothers by hurling their own fair bodies between the embittered armies, thus Hilde's loving intercession calms the passions of the struggling heroes. Fierce Hagen is at last reconciled to his daughter and Hettel, and he accompanies them to the royal castle where they are solemnly united in marriage. Historically, we see in these adventures a reminiscence of the ancient Teutonic custom of gaining the bride by conquest or violence.

From the union of Hettel and fair Hilde sprang two children: Ortwin and Gudrun, who even surpasses her mother in beauty. The Hegeling daughter is sought by the most powerful princes, but Hettel deems none worthy of his daughter. Hartmut, King of the Normans, when rejected, appears disguised at Hettel's court and reveals himself to Gudrun, who, feeling pity for the beautiful youth, advises him to flee from her father's wrath: "His life would be done for, were Hettel to recognize him." Hartmut retires but to prepare for war, for once having seen charming Gudrun, he can no longer live without her. Meanwhile, Herwig of Seeland, a Frisian king, who had

also been rejected, appears with three thousand heroes before Hettel's castle: he strikes the flaming wind from many a helmet. Fair Gudrun has never known such delight as that which the deeds of the brave heroes give; the sight of him is to her both love and sorrow. Herwig and Hettel meet in deadly combat, "fiery glow flamed from their shields, red wounds are struck," until Gudrun intercedes in person; peace is concluded, and Herwig is betrothed to Gudrun.

The news of this engagement exasperates King Siegfried of Morland, who had sought vainly for Gudrun's hand. He invades Herwig's country, and Herwig in his extremity appeals to Gudrun, his betrothed. Her father, Hettel, with his men, goes to Herwig's aid. While he is thus engaged, Ludwig and Hartmut of Normandy, having learned through spies that the land of the Hegelings is denuded of men, sail with a powerful host to Hettel's land and soon advance upon the sunny castle of Hilde. Hartmut, unwilling to wrong his beloved Gudrun if she will accept his suit, announces his love to her, and threatens to carry her away by force if she resists. Gudrun replies that she belongs, body and soul, to Herwig and that she will never break faith with him. Ludwig and Hartmut storm the castle and carry away Gudrun and her sixty-two attendants, among them her best beloved companion, Hildeburg. Queen Hilde looks on with powerless tears and broken heart. She sends messengers to Hettel and Herwig, who conclude an honorable peace with King Siegfried, and with their new ally set out in pursuit of the Normans. At the mouth of the river Sheldt, on the island of Wulpensand, the Normans with their beautiful captive rest. Here they are overtaken by the Seelanders. The terrible battle that ensues has been sung in many lays throughout Germany. "You'd see the heroes' bodies with glowing blood color

the sea. The waves flowed to the strand reddened everywhere."

More and more Hegelings sink to the ground. Ludwig slays King Hettel: "This was sorrowful tidings to many hearts." When fierce Wate perceives his master's death, he begins to rage like a wild boar. Ortwin and Horant are beside themselves with rage and strive to avenge their fallen king, but night stops the carnage. The Normans succeed in reaching their ships under the cover of darkness and in escaping with their hard-won booty. The Hegelings are so reduced in numbers that no further pursuit can be made. Wate brings the sad tidings to Queen Hilde in the desolate tower: "No use to keep the calamity from you; I will not deceive you, they are all dead, our heroes." Revenge must be postponed, "until all those who now stand before us as children, have grown ripe for the sword; many a noble orphan will then be mindful of his father and will be a helper on the new journey." But poor Hilde expresses her despair of the distant hope.

Meanwhile, the triumphant Normans approach the coast of their fatherland. King Ludwig, in sight of the towers of his castle, kindly reminds tearful Gudrun that all this beautiful land shall belong to her if she will marry Hartmut. This only increases her sorrow: "Ere I'll take Sir Hartmut, I shall rather be dead. His is not of a house that I could love him. I'll lose life rather than win him as my friend." Incensed at her bitter words, Ludwig seizes the princess by the hair and hurls her into the foaming sea. But loving Hartmut springs after her, rescues her and places her with tender care in his boat. At the landing Queen Gerlinde and her daughter Ortrun with their attendants hasten to welcome the Norman heroes and fair Gudrun, who accepts Ortrun's kiss, but refuses that of the old queen, knowing well that the latter is the

source of all her misfortunes, and having a presentiment of the greater evils that threatened her. As she continues to cling to her betrothed, Herwig, and defies the advances of Hartmut, whose father had slain hers, Gerlinde undertakes to break her pride while Hartmut is absent upon a new expedition. But the young king entreats his mother before his departure "to instruct the poor, homeless princess in all kindness." This the queen attempts, but as Gudrun persists in her refusal, Gerlinde is enraged and exclaims: "If thou wilt not have joy, sorrow shall be thy share." Thereafter, she subjects Gudrun to a series of humiliations. First, she is separated from her noble playmates, who are condemned to spin and do other womanly handiwork. The royal virgin herself is forced to perform the most servile work, she is obliged to heat the stoves, to wash the linen, and to sweep the floor, this last with her silken hair; she is chastised by Gerlinde, she is fed on black bread and water, and her couch is a hard bench. Ortrun's sisterly affection for Gudrun is the only bright spot in her gloomy existence. Hartmut's love and the protection which he vowed to her at first, finally turn to impatience, and he abandons her to the unmitigated ill treatment of her tormentor, Queen Gerlinde, by whom Gudrun is condemned to perpetual servitude and shame. Gudrun's noble attendant, Hildeburg, by piteous entreaty obtains permission to participate in the grievous work of her royal mistress. For nearly six years they wash Gerlinde's garments in the sea, in wind and storm, in snow and ice. But Gudrun's pure and faithful heart remains unshaken.

Thirteen years have now passed since the terrible events on the Wulpensand. The boys of the land of the Hegelings have grown to be men. Queen Hilde, unforgetful of the captivity of her daughter Gudrun, and of her duty

to avenge King Hettel's death, summons her heroes and friends and allies, foremost among whom is Herwig, to an expedition against the Normans. A strong fleet is armed; some sixty thousand men follow Hilde's summons. Horant of Denmark is the leader of the fleet. After a stormy passage the coast of Normandy is reached. The allies land unnoticed under the cover of mountain and forest, safe from the observation of the spies. Ortwin, Gudrun's brother, and Herwig, her betrothed, go forward as scouts.

Following the natural order of events, we now pass in the grand epic to the romantic element, the lyrical *intermezzo* of longing and love, of truth and faith, to the realm of hope and consolation. All the virtues and charms of the Teutonic woman's nature are revealed in Gudrun: superhuman agencies intervene for her deliverance. One day Gudrun and Hildeburg stand on the strand of the sea, occupied with their customary menial work of washing,—in strange contrast to the same womanly occupation of the Grecian princess Nausicaa and her noble attendants in the *Odyssey*, where everything is brightness and delight,—when they suddenly perceive a beautiful bird swimming toward them. It is a divine messenger, who brings them glad tidings, pronounced with a human voice:

"Be ready, homeless maid, a lofty happiness awaits thee; God sends me for thy comfort to this strand." He satisfies her longing questions, tells her that Hilde lives, and of the hosts and the fleet she has sent out for Gudrun's rescue, of Ortwin and Herwig and all the rest of her liberators. Then the mysterious bird disappears, and the two princesses are left in suspense. They forget their work, and must therefore at their return endure the bitter chidings of Gerlinde, who sends them forth the next morning to the same work, to which they go barefooted and clothed only in their shirts, though heavy snow covers the

fields, and ice dams the waterways. Well might they then send out their longing glances over the sea whence are to come the messengers whom the queen Hilde has sent for their rescue. Suddenly they perceive two men approaching in a boat. Ashamed of their servile work, and still more of their nakedness, they flee, but Herwig and Ortwin call them back and offer their mantles to the unknown and beautiful servants, who tremble from cold, in their wet shirts, their locks flying in the sharp wind. Modestly they refuse to accept the mantles of the men. Ortwin inquires the name of the person who has subjected them to such cruel work. Herwig looks in silent amazement at the beautiful, the glorious, the royal woman in her degradation; "the hero compared her to one whom he cherished in true memory."

When Ortwin further inquires after the noble women, especially Gudrun, who many years ago had been dragged into Normandy, she replies: "Gudrun died in sorrow,"—a characteristic reply which proves that in the ancient Germanic world, as well as in that of Greece, a cunning little lie was not amiss even in the mouth of a charming princess. When the tears well forth from the eyes of the heroes,—another trait of the ancient Germanic past as well as of the Greek,—and Herwig draws forth the betrothal ring of yore, Gudrun says, smiling:

> "'Well do I know this ringlet, betimes it came from me;
> Behold now this one, warriors, by Herwig sent to me,
> When I, abandoned orphan, lived in my father's land.'"

Overwhelmed by joy, Herwig clasps his beloved Gudrun in his arms to carry her away at once, but proud Ortwin will not snatch her away stealthily from the enemy; and Herwig promises to stand, before the sun rises in the morning, before the gates of the Norman city with sixty thousand

chosen warriors. The maidens follow with their eyes the departing heroes till their boat vanishes in the mist.

Gudrun exults over the thought of their approaching liberation. Her entire nature seems to change. From the patient, enduring, humble, martyr-like, though constant and faithful, maiden, she changes to a proud, self-asserting queen. Angrily she hurls the linen, the symbol of her humiliation, into the flood; she is too highly placed; she declares to the warning, anxious friend Hildeburg that she will never wash again for Gerlinde, for two kings have kissed her and held her in their arms. When, at their late arrival at the castle, Gerlinde receives them with harsh words, asks for the linen, and learns that Gudrun has thrown it into the sea, the she-wolf—as she is called here in the epic—orders thorn rods to be tied together to chastise Gudrun. But the cunning maiden, who, as we have seen, does not shrink from a needful little lie, escapes by a clever ruse:

> "'Release me from chastisement, you'll gladly do it—sure;
> For whom I have rejected, I choose now for my lord;
> As queen will I reside in the Normanish fields;
> In power I shall perform deeds: you'll scarcely trust your eyes."

Gerlinde immediately informs her son Hartmut of Gudrun's decision; but when he hastens to the spot to embrace her, she declines, saying:

> "'O King Hartmut, leave this yet undone!
> If people saw this action, it would be your dishonor;
> I am a lowly servant, how would it be befitting,
> Were a mighty king to embrace me or to touch me?'"

Overjoyed, Hartmut orders Gudrun and her maidens to be clothed in costly garments and to be regaled royally; and for the first time in fourteen years Queen Gudrun laughs merrily among her Hegeling sisters, who are

overcome by the sudden change of events. The report of Gudrun's merriment causes Gerlinde a presentiment of evil; she warns her son, but he has no eyes or ears but for Gudrun's charms. When the maidens retire for the first time in fourteen years to a soft couch, Gudrun reveals to them the fact that help and salvation are near, and promises "buroughs and acres" to her who will first announce to her the morning which shall bring to them the day of freedom and of revenge.

Meanwhile, Herwig and Ortwin return to their host and relate to the companions Gudrun's and Hildeburg's fate. Old Wate proposes to attack the Normans without delay, and "to wash red the white garments which their white hands had washed in the sea." "Before dawn they shall stand as guests before King Ludwig's fortress." And, indeed, at the rising of the morning star, one of Gudrun's maidens sees from the window the fields shining with arms and the sea filled with sails. Quickly she awakes Gudrun, while at the same time the king's warders cry from the battlements:

> "'Get up, ye proud heroes, get up, hosts, to your arms:
> Brave Normans, all too long, methinks, have you slept.'"

The masterly description of the terrific battle, which is worthy of the best traditions of the German epic, does not belong to this work. Yet the gathering of the Hegelings around Queen Hilde's banner, King Herwig's bride standing high on the battlement of the tower, while King Hartmut and the Norman heroes march under the arch of the gate are objective pictures showing that the womanly element is the pivot upon which the story turns.

When old King Ludwig is slain by Herwig, the she-wolf, Gerlinde, sends out a murderer to kill Gudrun, but Hartmut generously saves her—mindful of the beloved one

even in the stress of battle. When Hartmut himself is on the point of succumbing under the blows of Wate, Gudrun, softened by Ortrun's prayer, sends out Herwig to intercede in Hartmut's behalf. Wate scornfully refuses, but Herwig, from his love for Gudrun, covers the enemy with his own body, and Hartmut is snatched away and carried into captivity with eighty of his knights. The contrast of this battle with its many traits of love and compassion, even for the enemy, of self-restraint and humanity, to similar scenes in the *Nibelungenlied* with its ruthless, merciless, savage lust of blood and revenge, is strikingly apparent.

Gerlinde, in miserable fear of death, seeks at last a refuge with Gudrun. The latter is willing to save her old tormenter, but Gerlinde is betrayed to Wate by one of her servants. Wate, who has many of the traits of Hagen in the *Nibelungenlied,* seizes her, wildly exclaiming in fearful wrath, yet using her royal title:

"Lady Queen Gerlinde, you'll never more condemn to menial servitude my queen's sweet daughter." With these words he cuts off her head. The same fate befalls also young Duchess Hergart, one of Gudrun's attendants, who for gifts had bestowed her love upon Hartmut and had been faithless and overbearing to Gudrun. Poor Ortrun, who had befriended Gudrun, and her other women were spared upon Gudrun's intercession. Thus punishment and reward are evenly balanced; the ethical element of equal justice prevails everywhere, leaving no bitter aftertaste to the reader of the glorious epic. When King Herwig enters the lofty hall of the Norman king with his companions, Gudrun lovingly hastens toward him, and puts her arms around her hero.

The dead are removed, the blood-stained walls are cleaned so that Gudrun may dwell in the castle, and the Hegelings begin "to inspect Hartmut's inheritance." After the hostile fortresses are broken and justice is satisfied, the

conquerors depart with Gudrun and rich treasures: Hartmut is carried away with the other prisoners. Queen Hilde receives her heroes on the shore, but, at first, does not recognize her daughter Gudrun when she is led up to her. Mother and daughter hold one another in a tender embrace: sorrow and pain quickly turn to joy and delight. Ortrun, too, is received graciously for the noble friendship bestowed by her upon Gudrun during the long years of captivity. Hartmut and his men, having pledged themselves not to escape, are freed from their fetters.

Now the preparations for the festivities of love and marriage are begun. The epic rings out in a sweet chant of love and reconciliation. Gudrun's faithfulness is blessed by Herwig's marital love. But Gudrun is unwilling to be blessed alone. The hate between the Normans and the Hegelings must be wiped out: the Norman princess Ortrun is married to King Ortwin. Hartmut, who for so long had cherished a hopeless love for Gudrun, transfers his affections to noble Hildeburg, who had shared Gudrun's sorrowful captivity.

The bridals are celebrated on one day, mourning and woe are changed to joy, the hostile races are reconciled and reunited by the ties of blood and love in an alliance for defence and offence. The end of the *Gudrun* saga stands thus, in direct contrast to the end of the *Nibelungenlied*. The type of Kriemhilde has revealed to us one-half of the possibilities of the German woman's soul; the type of Gudrun, its other half, in its sweetness, its endurance, its martyrdom for all that is great and good and noble; its patriotism, love, and virtue. Within the range of those two natures we can differentiate all the souls of the millions of German women that lived and loved, hated and struggled, suffered and died in the dim ages of the foundation of Germanic social order and institutions.

Chapter IV

The Centuries of Submergence and of Nationalization

IV

THE CENTURIES OF SUBMERGENCE AND OF NATIONALIZATION

CHARLEMAGNE, the man typical of Teutonic force and power, a consummator of ancient forces and an initiator of a new progress, stands between the German and the Roman worlds as a gigantic form on the boundary line of two nations and two civilizations. Charlemagne was the first to realize the political unity of western Christendom as spiritually personified in the Papacy. This is the significance of that mighty event, pregnant with tremendous possibilities for good and for evil, when on the Christmas day of A. D. 800, the Pope bestowed upon Charlemagne the political crown of the Christian world with the obligation to support the church in its spiritual and secular supremacy. Only by the imperial crown, as a continuation of the majesty of the Roman Cæsars, could Germany maintain even its ascendancy among the other nations of Europe.

When the German races were organized as a nation and imbued with the Christian faith by Charlemagne, this new political formation became the bearer of a new civilization amalgamated from its various constituents and as complex as was the state itself. Though preëminently papal and clerical, yet it was, also, eminently intellectual and classical. The treasures of a new thought, of culture, of Greco-Roman refinement, and even of material wealth, were opened to the people of Germany. Fruitful as these

Roman germs were, they were only a ferment for German strength and characteristics; for the Germans alone made Christianity a living issue. It was impossible for the putrid soil of the decaying Roman Empire to become a fruitful abode for Christianity.

Men and women fled to the desert to worship God in solitary contemplation and far from the temptation of the world. The monks—in spite of the faults and the degeneration which will ever cling to things human—are, after all, the purveyors of intellectual and moral culture. The cloisters, too, were at first fortresses of civilization, labor, agriculture, artisanship, and, though with monachal limitations, they were yet transmitters of literary and classical antiquity.

We need only recall the life of the disciples of Saint Benedict in the cloister of Saint Gall, so dramatically described by Scheffel in his *Ekkehard,* their activity in letters and missionary work and gardening, in the copying of the classics and in teaching, as Ekkehard taught the Duchess Hadwig the intellectual charms of the great pagan poet Virgil, to realize the debt owed by civilization to these monks. Though they and their classics, Aristotle, Cicero, Virgil, etc., sunk into the foundations of our civilization, yet, in their fanatic zeal, they destroyed many priceless old German treasures, relics of antiquity, which are, unfortunately, irretrievably lost. Charlemagne, with his deep intuition, recognized the value of these relics, and, assisted by the staff of free-hearted and free-minded scholars with whom he had surrounded himself, tried to save what could yet be saved.

With the advent of the monk came the nun. The great Boniface, the apostle of the Germans, with inflexible will and diplomatic shrewdness, availed himself of the especial gifts of woman to aid in subjecting Germany to the Holy See. Not finding sufficient aid in Germany, he fetched

women from England. The Anglo-Saxon abbesses, Lioba of Bischofsheim, Thekla of Kitzingen, and Walpurgis of Heidenheim, were of immense utility in his missionary work, and left a saintly memory in Germany. They raised the female priesthood of the nuns to a lofty height, their cloisters were nurseries of culture. Princesses and royal daughters sought the veil as an honor or as a refuge from the trials of their high station. It is true, however, that the monasteries of the nuns did not always maintain their original purity. Not seldom a nun broke her vow and preferred excommunication to a loveless existence. Sometimes the nuns tried to console themselves in the cloister itself for the dreariness of their existence. The Capitularies of Charlemagne inform us of the manner in which vagrant nuns, amorous dwellers in cloisters, offended against religious laws. Sometimes, indeed, the nuns even carried on amours for money, and the natural consequences of the breach of the vows of chastity were removed by crime, while, on the other hand, the chastisements meted out for such crimes were truly barbarous. There are capitularies that prescribe that nuns' cloisters be not too conveniently near to the monasteries of monks, and others that accurately define the intercourse between clerics and laymen, that set forth the rule that "no abbess should presume to go outside of the monastery without episcopal permission nor permit her subordinate nuns to do so, that they shall not dare to write or send love-songs (*winileodes*);" but it is not less true that *winileodes* continued to be realistically played in the nunneries and played in earnest. That luxury and high living must have developed in cloisters appears from a capitulary which forbids abbesses to have packs of hounds, and falcons, and hawks, and jugglers; that they shall live "regularly," and that their cloisters should be "rationally" established.

We prefer, however, to write of the many holy women, the nuns, especially the Anglo-Saxon nuns, who obtained martyrdom by coöperating with Winfrid, the apostle of the Germans and other holy missionaries of the time. The monk Rudolf of Fulda wrote a biography of Saint Lioba after the report of her female disciples. Lioba was educated in an English nunnery which had been founded at Winbrunne (to-day Wimborne Minster, Dorsetshire), together with a monastery. Very naïvely Rudolf asserts that in spite of the proximity of the institutions no undue intercourse between their inhabitants ever occurred; nay, the abbess was so strict that she forbade entrance to the assemblies of the nuns, not only to clerics and laymen, but also to the bishops. At this holy place did the virgin grow up, soon becoming the star of piety and wisdom in the cloister, and the favorite of the abbess. Thence she was sent by the will of Boniface to Germany and placed at the head of the cloister of Bischofsheim. From all parts of Germany young women went to her cloister to learn virtue and wisdom from the holy woman. When Boniface prepared himself for his last missionary expedition to the pagan Frisians, he commended his pious sister to his successor, exhorted her not to weary in her holy work, and directed that her body after death should be placed with his own in one grave, that they should both await the day of resurrection after they had served Christ in the same endeavor and aspiration during their lives. When Boniface had found the martyr's death in Frisia, Lioba worked on for many years with beneficent activity in the Christianization of Germany. Venerated by all she was an especial favorite of Charlemagne and his consort Hildegard, yet she preferred at all times the atmosphere of her cloister to the luxurious life at the court. She died A. D. 780, sanctified by the Church, and many

miracles are related by Rudolf as having happened at her grave.

There are scores of similar legends in the Latin literature of the time, for, from the eighth century on, Germany is filled with holy women and maidens, promoters of the Church, founders of cloisters. The nun's garment is revered everywhere; the veiled, consecrated maids of God owe their high appreciation to their virgin state for which—as already especially mentioned—the Germans felt a deeply ingrained veneration. The "Maria-cult" had constantly grown in importance since the fifth century. Goethe's "eternal feminine" celebrated its apotheosis in the new faith as it had in the old belief in Freya and the Valkyries. Mary's motherhood was sacred, but sacred only because it was motherhood with virginity, eternal virginity. Yet the ideal of womanly beauty and fascination is not at all lacking. Scherr translates a description given by the Church Father Epiphanius—as early as the fourth century—of the Holy Virgin as the ideal of pure womanhood. And, though the memory of Olympus is apparent everywhere in the description, Epiphanius from Palestine pictures Mary, the Mother of Christ, as a truly *German* ideal of beauty: a golden-haired, blue-eyed Madonna. "The most beautiful of women, gloriously formed, neither too short nor too long. Her form was white, finely colored and immaculate; her hair was long, soft, gold-colored. Under a well-shaped forehead and bright brown eyebrows shone her moderately large eyes with the lustre of a sapphire. The white in her eye was milk-colored and brilliant as crystal. The straight and normal nose as well as the mouth were comparable to snow in whiteness. Each of her cheeks was like a lily upon which lies a rose-leaf. Her well-rounded chin bore a dimple, her throat was white and ivory, her neck slender and well-proportioned. Fine

was her gait, graceful the play of her features, chaste her entire attitude. Briefly, excepting the Son of God, none ever possessed such a beautiful and pure body as the Holy Virgin Mary." Indeed, the humanizing of the Mother of God was as complete as that of foam-born Aphrodite in Homer. Mary is the leader, the choregetes of saintly womanhood; solemnly enthroned in the heavens, she moves everything, including Christ, her Son. She is the alpha and omega of Christian poetry and art.

No wonder that women of all states of society found high incentives toward dedicating their lives to the service of Christ and the Holy Virgin. The disappointments and trials of womanhood, too, prompted many to seek seclusion from the world. Scheffel, in his *Ekkehard,* describes such a type of holy recluse under the title of *Wiborada Reclusa.* She had once been a proud, unapproachable maiden, he says, well versed in many arts; she had learned from her priestly brother Hitto to repeat all the Psalms in Latin, and had not once been inclined to sweeten the life of a husband; the bloom of her land (Suabia) had found no grace before her eyes, and she had made a pilgrimage to Rome. There her soul must have been shaken to its foundation; for three days she was lost sight of, for three days her brother Hitto was running up and down the Forum, and through the halls of the Coliseum and under Constantine's triumphal arch, down to the four-headed Janus on the Tiber, seeking his sister and finding her not. On the morning of the fourth day, she came in through the Salarian gate and carried her head aloft, and her eyes were shining, and she spoke, saying that everything was vain in the world as long as the honor due to Saint Martin was not rendered to him.

When she returned home, she bequeathed her property to the Episcopal church at Constance, on condition

that the priests on the eleventh day of every October should celebrate in honor of Saint Martin. She herself entered into a narrow hut, where the recluse Citia had established herself, and led a cloister life. And when this place no longer suited her, she removed to a cell in the valley of Saint Gall. The bishop himself conducted her thither and put the black veil around her, and led her by the hand to the Irish hill (Saint Gall had been an Irish missionary in Germany) and spoke the blessing over her; with the trowel he made the first stroke on the stones with which the entrance was walled up, and pressed four times his seal upon the lead wherewith they closed the cracks, and thus separated her from the world, and the monks sang at that, mournfully and with muffled tones, as if someone were buried. But the people of the neighborhood held the recluse in high honor; they said that she was a "hard-forged mistress of holyness," and on Sunday they stood head to head on the meadow plain, and Wiborada stood at her little window and preached to them, and other women settled in the neighborhood and sought instruction from her in virtue.

The influence of the Church was especially beneficial to the position of woman in married life. The Church insisted upon, and frequently enforced, monogamy and the sanctity of marital vows, and sanctified marriage by making it a sacrament. Dissolution of marriage, according to the law of the Church, was permitted only in case of adultery, of danger to the life of the one or the other party from hate or crime, the exile of one of the couple, impotence on the part of the man, or sterility on the part of the woman, and by common agreement between husband and wife for sacred purposes, *e. g.*, entrance into a monastery or cloister. Yet while the influence of the Church, in theory, was, on the whole, extremely helpful

in fashioning the standard of morals, there prevailed, nevertheless, even during the Carlovingian epoch, a terrible demoralization and sexual laxity—a legacy from the preceding Merovingian period.

It is historically doubtful whether at Charlemagne's birth his mother was married to his father, Pepin. It was no uncommon practice for the actual consummation of marriage to follow close upon the betrothal, and for the actual marriage, with the consecration of the Church, to follow much later, if at all. The private life of the greatest German emperor, who was canonized by the Church and who thus is a saint, at least in his imperial city, Aachen, or Aix-la-Chapelle, is by no means edifying. Gustav Freytag characterizes Charlemagne from the moral point of view with the greatest psychological truth. He describes him as greatly in need of woman's love. Indeed, even here his tenderness was that of a lion, and was felt by wife and daughters with secret awe, though answered by flattering caresses. When not on warlike expeditions he lived always with his family. He ate with them, and took them with him on all his journeys. This was tedious enough for his successive wives and daughters, since he was almost always on journeys, especially during the first half of his long reign. While his children were small, he had hardly a permanent home. His family life appeared reprehensible, even to his contemporaries, who were accustomed to great digressions from moral law.

The chroniclers of the time, mostly court historians and court poets of the great emperor, naturally express themselves rather cautiously concerning his private life; and yet we can deduce strange facts from their reports, especially from the *Life of Charlemagne,* written by Eginhard, the friend and counsellor of the emperor. The latter's mother, Berthvada, induced him to marry Desiderata,

daughter of King Desiderius of the Langobards; but he divorced her at the end of one year, whether for political reasons—not to be entangled in the complications between the Langobard dynasty and the Papacy—or for private considerations is not known. His next wife was Hildegard, an Alemannian duchess, who bore him three sons, Charles, Pepin, and Louis, and three daughters, Hruodrud, Bertha, and Gisela. By his third wife, Fastrada, a German princess of Eastern-Frankish birth, he had two daughters, Theodorada and Hiltrud, and by a concubine, Ruodhaid. His next wife, Liutgard, bore him no children. After her death he had three concubines, Gerswinda, a Saxon lady, the mother of Adaltrud; Regina, the mother of Drogo and Hugh; and Ethelind (Adalinde). It is characteristic, however, that this authentic account does not designate the mothers of all his children. Charlemagne desired that all the children of his mistresses as well as of his legitimate wives should live together at his court and be of equal royal rank. Without distinction of sex, he gave to all of them a liberal education in the sciences; and as soon as their age permitted, his sons were trained in arms, and his daughters instructed in the use of the loom and the spindle. He had so great an affection for his children that he prevented his daughters from marriage, in order not to lose their company. They are reputed to have been very beautiful, and, in spite of their occupation with the spinning-wheel, they found time for love adventures; so that, as Eginhard tells us, "though otherwise happy, the Emperor experienced the malignity of fortune so far as they were concerned; yet he concealed his knowledge of the rumors current in regard to them, and of the suspicions entertained with regard to their honor."

Eginhard himself did not escape suspicion, though his amour with fair Emma, and the romantic story of their

nightly meetings and Emma's carrying her learned lover through the freshly fallen snow to conceal his footprint—must be assigned to the domain of unauthenticated legend. But it is a historical fact that several of Charlemagne's daughters had illegitimate children. Being debarred from marriage they sought unlawful love adventures. The oldest, Hruodrud, who had been several years betrothed to the Greek emperor, Constantine Porphyrogenitos, until her father dissolved the betrothal, left a son by Count Rorich. Bertha's two sons, Hartnid and Nidhard, the latter a brave warrior and a famous chronicler, owed their existence to Angilbert, the court poet and historian who was afterward Abbot of Centulum. Especially after the death of Charlemagne were the lives of his daughters so shameful that King Ludwig, the German, saw himself forced to remove some of the most scandalously behaving lords from the suite of the princely sinners.

In spite of those moral shortcomings, Princess Bertha was especially brilliant as a scholar. She was called Delia, sister of Apollo, in Charlemagne's "Academy." She sang her teacher Alcuin's poems, which she accompanied by string music. Besides the emperor's wife and his daughters, there were two nuns in the academic circle: the elder, Gisela, Charlemagne's sister, surnamed Lucia, Alcuin's best friend, and her intimate, Riktrudis, with the academic name of Columba; also Gundrada, of illustrious nobility and charm, the sole secular lady at the court against whom no word of gossip was ever uttered by courtiers or clerics.

So flagrant are, however, the sins of love at that brilliant court which did so much for classical, Germanic, and sacred learning in Germany, that even the saga, in dim recollection of past events, seized upon Charlemagne's towering figure in respect to his moral side. He is represented

by a later legend as having been misled into grievous sins by a mysterious, magic precious stone in a ring which he had presented to his queen. As long as she wore the ring, he could not live away from her. At last the queen fell ill and came to die. But grudging the stone to any other woman and desiring that the king might not love another as he loved her, she concealed the ring under her tongue and died. Charlemagne unable to live without her did not allow her to be buried, but carried her with him day and night on the journey through his vast realm. An inexpressible sin, due to the magic ring in her mouth, ensued. At last, when Charlemagne was absent, the corpse of the dead woman was examined and the ring was found in her mouth. A knight took the ring away and kept it. Charlemagne had the queen buried at once. But all the love which he bore to his dead wife, he now transferred to the knight as long as the latter possessed the stone. The knight, annoyed by this love and the shame thereof, threw away the stone into a morass. Charlemagne conceived such an affection for the place where the ring lay that he built there the Cathedral of Our Lady at Aachen (Aix-la-Chapelle). And, as a higher irresistible power had brought about the moral sins as well as other sins bearing the character of incest, Saint Ægidius and Saint Theodolin secured for him atonement, expiation, and absolution.

The court life at the time of Charlemagne, loose as it was, had its great redeeming features; it sank, however, under his weak successors into the utmost decay and degradation. The dynasty perished with Ludwig the Child (A. D. 911). Charles the Fat, the unworthy descendant of his great sire Charlemagne, had given the world, during his calamitous reign, the melancholy spectacle of a king publicly accusing his wife, Richardis, of adultery with

his own chancellor, Liutward, Bishop of Vercelli. But Richardis asserted that she was a virgin—though she had been living with her husband for twelve years. The emperor forced an ordeal (A. D. 887) to free her from the terrible accusation: and an ordeal remained, during the entire Middle Ages, the only means for an accused woman to purify herself and redeem her honor. This special ordeal is minutely described in the so-called *Kaiserchronik* (Chronicle of Emperors), how Richardis slipped into a garment made for that purpose, which was set on fire at all four ends, at her feet and arms, simultaneously. In a short hour the garment burned from her body; the wax dripped down to the pavement, but the royal lady remained unhurt, and the spectators of the cruel ordeal cried *Deo gratias!* Richardis, however, retired after this disgrace to a cloister which she had founded.

The same accusation was raised later against Kunigunde, wife of the last Saxon emperor, Henry II. the Pious, but she, too, was exonerated by the ordeal of "the hot iron" upon which she trod with impunity. Kunigunde has been canonized by the Church for having preserved her virginity also in married life, and for having forced the devil to church building.

The moral life of the higher classes was duly reflected in the lower walks of life. The female serfs, who, as we learn from imperial decrees of the time, when they did not work in the fields, carried on their domestic labors in a separate house, called *screona* (shrine), were practically helpless in the hands of their masters. Those outhouses were frequently used as places for gratifying lust by forcing their inmates to sin, though nominal fines still prevailed for rape or violence: he who "covered" (*belag*) a maid "without her thanks," *i. e.*, against her will, paid a fine of three shillings; if she was a head-maid,

or a stewardess or skilled laborer, six shillings. Thus it happened that as early as the time of Charlemagne the women's house came to have the flavor of infamy—*Frauenhäuser* was the name of houses of prostitution during the Middle Ages. Unfree women could marry only with the permission of their masters; the bridegroom had, in recognition of this fact, to pay a tax (*maritagium*) called by different obscene names in different localities, as a redemption, as it were, of the bride's virginity. Naturally, the female serf was helpless against the lord, who did what he pleased: a shameful abuse, which, in the course of time, crystallized into a right; the infamous *jus primæ noctis, i. e.*, the right of the lord to the body of his unfree female serf during the first night of her married life. The several attempts to relegate this usage to the realm of legends have signally failed. Both Scherr and Freytag expatiate on this gloomy subject, on which a whole legal and cultural literature has sprung up. Passing quickly over this saddest of all the chapters of human subjection to shame, many a beautiful feature of the growth of womanhood among the lower classes may be noted.

With the general improvements of agriculture under Charlemagne, there was a corresponding improvement in the art of building. Instead of the old German block-house, plastered with clay, the crevices filled with reed, and without windows or staircases, in which people and cattle were stalled together, dwellings fit for human beings were gradually evolved. The dwellings of unfree people (*Hörige*) consisted of house, barn, and stable for cattle, while the estates and houses of landed proprietors comprised mansion (*sala, Herrenhaus*), cellar house (*cellaria*), bath house, grange (*spicarium*), stables, and a separate house for women (*genitium* or *screona*) in which the women handled distaff and spindle, spinning linen and wool, making

ornaments, embroidery, figures in cloth, and other feminine work. There they sat, the distaff between their knees, the spindle in their hands, beautiful pictures of noble German womanhood. There they made the linen garments for themselves and their families, including their husbands. Royal ladies worked not less than peasant women or unfree maids. Later on, Luitgardis, daughter of Emperor Otto the Great, was so famed for being an industrious spinner that a golden spindle was hung over her grave. The tailoring needle and scissors were handled with skill, as is certified in many a mediæval song. The Carlovingian period, therefore, furnishes us with much over which to lament, but also with much over which to rejoice. Virtue and vice are there in abundant measure.

The Christian-German civilization founded by Charlemagne was almost destroyed under his successors. Under Charlemagne we could treat his vast realm, at least so far as it covered France and the North, as genuinely Teutonic land; two generations later, under his grandsons, Charles the Bald and Ludwig the German, we must begin the separation of France and Germany, by the Treaty of Verdun, A. D. 843, while the middle land, namely, Burgundy, Alsace, and Lorraine, which fell to Lothaire with the already shadowy imperial crown, becomes the *Eris-apple* between the two. Germany and France, originally one, are separated by a territorial dispute for more than one thousand years.

Side by side with the heroic figures of Henry I. (919–936), who refounded the shattered empire, and his still greater son, Otto I., who rebuilt it, we find spirited princesses, some of them, like Adelheid of Burgundy, foreigners, with great zeal for culture, who brought an appreciation of refinement and art to the German court. Otto the Great's son and grandson added the Byzantine

culture to the Roman-Carlovingian substratum. The women of the tenth century played a remarkably active part in politics and literature. Mathilda and Editha, the pious wives of the first two Saxon emperors, powerfully affected the civilization of their time. The reigns of Otto II. and Otto III. bear most decided traces of the influence of two royal women, Adelheid and Theophano, who exercised a strong influence upon the political and intellectual life of the century.

The period of the Ottos marks the climax of an early renaissance as distinguished from the great classical movement so called five centuries later. In art, this renaissance is expressed by churches and palaces built after late Roman and Byzantine models, partly even with the materials of those times; in literature, the renaissance blossoms in classical studies, Latin historiography and poetry. Indeed, Tietmar of Merseburg, the famous chronicler of the Saxon emperors, could well say: "Proud like Lebanon's cedars the Empire towered, a terror to all nations far and wide;" and again: "Highly blessed was the world when Otto wielded the sceptre."

As regards the moral life of the times, Tietmar's *Chronicon* presents Henry, the founder of the dynasty, as not faultless. The legend also weaves around Henry the wreath of romance when it reports that Princess Ilse of the Herz Mountains kissed the cares from his royal brow in her wondrous castle, a favor which, according to the charming Ilse song, she bestows some nine hundred years later on Heine, the darling of the Muses. When still very young, Henry concluded a marriage with Hatheburch, a distinguished widow at Merseburg, but rejected her after she had borne him a son, Thammo (Thankmar). He had fallen in love with Mathilda, a rich and beautiful maiden of the race of Duke Widukind, who had immortalized the

Saxon name in the thirty years' struggle with Charlemagne. She became Henry's wife and bore him three sons, Otto, Henry, and Bruno. She seems to have steadied her great husband, though their married life did not remain always cloudless. An episode related by Tietmar, "to deter and warn the pious," may be repeated here because of the flavor of its time: Henry had once on the day before Good Friday of Easter week intoxicated himself, and, driven by the devil, abused his pious wife in the following night. Satan, rejoicing over the deed, could not refrain from telling the story to a respectable matron of Merseburg, adding that the fruit of that unholy embrace would undoubtedly belong to him. The matron betook herself to the queen and exhorted her "to keep constantly priests and bishops ready to wash by holy baptism off the new-born child all that may be pleasing on him to the devil." When the devil learnt of this betrayal of his confidence, he chided the matron violently, but added that, after all, something of the godless deed would ever cling to the race of the king. And the chronicler explains the violent feuds of the sons of King Henry and their fratricidal, internecine strifes by the flagitious transgression of God's commandment: "thou shalt keep the Sabbath holy." Tietmar, continuing, says: "That there is nothing which is not permitted in legal marriage, is proved by the Holy Scriptures. But such lawful married life obtains through the observation of holidays and honorable dignity, and is not disturbed by the storm of threatening danger." Another example of the same sin is quoted: Uffo, a Magdeburg burgher, while violently intoxicated, forced his wife, Gelsusa, to yield to his will. When the woman, having conceived in that night, in due time bore a child, it had bent and crooked toes. Terrified at that sign, she had her husband called and complained to him that this mark of divine displeasure

was due to their common sin: "Behold, the wrath of God reveals itself to us and exhorts us that we should not act thus further! Thou hast committed a grievous sin in that thou commanded me what was not right; and I have sinned equally in that I obeyed thee." The fruit of sin, however, the babe, was taken from the exile of this life to the hosts of innocent children in heaven.

Queen Mathilda outlived her consort; and though she favored the succession of her younger son, Henry, she saw her eldest son, Otto (936–973), elevated to the throne of his father. Otto married an English princess, Editha, the pious daughter of King Ethmund. She was to the great emperor a pure and faithful consort. She was endowed with numberless virtues, a fact which became manifest after her death by miracles and heavenly signs. After nineteen years of married life "pleasing to God and men," says the chronicler, "she died, the noblest foreign princess who ever adorned the German Imperial throne." She left but one son, Luidoulf by name, whom Otto married to the only daughter of Hermann, Duke of Suabia, whom he succeeded. Otto married again, his bride being Adelheid, widow of the Italian king Lothaire, who, hard pressed by Berengar, ruler of Ivrea, had called the Emperor to Italy as her protector and liberator. "Otto," says Tietmar, naïvely, "who had heard of her far-famed beauty, under the pretext of travelling to Rome, marched to Lombardy, wooed the princess, who had escaped from Berengar's cruel prison, and induced her, after he had won her favor by rich presents, to yield to his wishes." We have a life of Empress Adelheid by the abbot Odilo of Cluny, who was an intimate friend and closely connected with her during the last years of her reign. He deprecates his ability to write the life of the empress, to do which either Cicero would have to be recalled from Orcus or the

presbyter Hieronymos from heaven. "For she deserves to be revered as the most imperial of all empresses. Not one before or after her was her equal, she so elevated and increased the Empire. She subjected defiant Germania, fruitful Italy and their princes to the sword and sceptre of Rome. Then noble king Otto won through her the imperial crown. Also the son whom she bore him, was the pride and ornament of the Empire."

After the death of Otto I., Adelheid, with her son, Otto II. (973–983), happily conducted the affairs of the empire and firmly established its supremacy. But evil people alienated the heart of her son; she retired to Burgundy, her home. Meanwhile, Germany mourned the absence of the benefactress, but all Burgundy exulted over her return. Seized by repentance, Otto humbly besought his mother to meet him at Pavia. Weeping, he threw himself down before his mother, and from that time the insoluble bond of love remained until Otto's premature death. Otto III. (983–1002) and his Greek mother, Theophano, his guardian, succeeded Otto II. Theophano, incited by the Greek, Philagathus, Archbishop of Piacenza, became hostile to the empress, and, overcome by anger, she uttered these menacing words: "If I shall still reign one year, Adelheid shall not rule over more ground than one can encompass with one hand." Before one month was over, Theophano was overtaken by Nemesis and died (June 15, 991), while Adelheid outlived her in the enjoyment of happiness. "So many realms as she possessed, through the grace of God, first as the consort of the great Otto, then as the guardian of her son and grandson, so many cloisters did she found at her own expense, in honor of the King of kings." Before the year 1000 of Our Lord had ended, longing to be united with the Lord of Hosts, on the 16th of December, she died "and her soul rose to the pure

light of the purest ether," says the chronicler, "and to describe all the miracles at her grave, another book would be necessary. But not to cover them entirely with silence—at her grave the blind recover their lost sight, the paralyzed the use of their limbs, those sick with fever are cured there. Many ailing with manifold diseases are healed by the grace and the compassion of Our Lord Jesus Christ." Forsooth, A. D. 1000 is yet the blessed time when "faith transported mountains."

The most memorable women of the Ottonian epoch is perhaps the nun Roswitha, or Hrotsuit, of the cloister of Gandersheim, who is regarded as the first German poetess, although her works are exclusively in Latin. Born of a noble Saxon family she came early to Gandersheim, where she was educated by the Carmelite sister Richardis and the highly cultured Abbess Gerberga, Otto's niece. She became steeped in the classics, and was soon able to imitate them to such an extent that her fame as the bright ringing voice of Gandersheim soon spread over the Christian world. She composed in Latin hexameters a eulogy on Saint Mary, legends of saints, and an epic of Otto's great deeds (*Carmen de gestis Oddonis I. Imperatoris*). The last work is rich in valuable information, but a part of it has, unfortunately, been lost. She also wrote the history of her cloister from its foundation until 919. But her fame is founded especially on her Latin comedies, or rather dramatic sketches, six in number, imitating the style of Terentius, but borrowing the material from sacred legends, and chiefly glorifying chastity and virginity. She takes as her themes womanly martyrdom, and the strength of which even the frail woman is capable, if animated by faith and virtue. She writes with a moral ascetic view and preëminently for her sisters in the cloisters. Yet, because of the taste of her time she introduces the reader

to situations which are rather delicate. Hence ensues a strange blending of classic sensualism and Christian spiritualism. The fire of sensuality blazes throughout, though the conclusion is always edifying through martyrdom; there is a struggle between vice and virtue, but in the end, the triumph of Christian sacrifices carries the day over the temptations and the sins of this world. Kuno Francke (*Social Forces in German Literature*) thinks that Roswitha, though surrounded by the atmosphere of the nunnery, was carried away by the naturalistic tendencies of her time. Scherr asserts: "Methinks that we may not offend her state as a nun when we suppose that she must have had, before she wrote her comedies, some experience in love, not merely in Terentius." Preferably, she chooses quite equivocal situations. It is true that in her preface she deprecates any such purpose with great ardor: "There are many good Christians who, for the sake of a more refined language, prefer the idle glitter of pagan books to the usefulness of the Holy Scriptures, a fault of which we also cannot acquit ourselves entirely. Then there are industrious Bible readers, who, though they despise the writings of the other pagans, yet read the poems of Terentius too frequently, and, allured by the grace of diction, stain their minds through acquaintance with unchaste objects. In view of this I, the clearly ringing voice of Gandersheim, have not disdained to imitate the much read author in diction, in order to glorify the praiseworthy chastity of pious women according to the measure of my feeble ability—in the same way as the vile vices of lascivious women are there represented." It is interesting to see how she executes her plan. Take for example, her play entitled *Abraham*. In this an old hermit hears that his stepdaughter, who had run away with a seducer, is living in abject misery. He seeks to rescue her from a

house of ill repute where she has sought shelter. She does not recognize him in his disguise, but he comes to see all the wretchedness of her life of shame, and melts her heart in a wonderfully poetic conversation which reminds one of Erasmus's colloquy between the youth and the fallen woman. "O my daughter, part of my soul, Maria, do you recognize the old man who with fatherly love brought you up and betrothed you to the Son of the Heavenly Lord?"—"Whither has flown that sweet angelic voice which formerly was yours?"—"Your maiden purity, your virgin modesty, where are they?"—"What reward, unless you repent, is before you? You that plunged wilfully from heavenly heights into the depth of hell!"—"Why did you flee from me? Why did you conceal your misery from me—from me who would have prayed and done penance for you?" The miserable woman in her agony replies only by exclamations of pain, and confesses: "After I had fallen a victim to sin, I did not dare approach you." Abraham replies to that: "To sin is human, to persist in sin is hellish. He who stumbles is not to be blamed, only he who neglects to rise as quickly as possible."

In the play *Dulcitius,* the Roman general so named, to commit an act of criminal wantonness, enters at night time the prison of three Christian maidens who had been thrown into confinement by order of Diocletian, the persecutor of Christians. But the would-be ravisher is confounded by the Holy Virgin, the protectress of innocence, and takes the pots and kettles and pans for the maidens. The virgins look through the chinks of the wall, and see the fool out of his mind holding the pots caressingly on his lap, and kissing tenderly the pans and kettles. Irene remarks: "His face and his hands and his clothes are soiled and blackened all over by his imaginary

sweethearts." "Just as it should be," replies Chiona, "it is the color of Satan who possesses him."

Such was the work of the virtuous Christian singer in a strange foreign garment, the only one possible for her to write in, for a popular written German language did not yet exist. But her work was not lost, or as she said herself in her preface: "If anybody shall find pleasure in this my devotion (*devotio*), I shall be glad; but if it should please no one, on account of my humble station or the rusticity of a faulty diction, I myself at least rejoice over what I have done." Later on, copies of her works were spread beyond her cloister. One copy was dug up some five hundred years later from the dust of the cloister library of Saint Emmeran at Regensburg by Conrad Celtes of Humanist fame, and edited by him in 1501. Roswitha was greeted by the world of the Renaissance as the "German Muse." Celtes's edition is adorned by the immortal Albrecht Dürer with a woodcut representing Roswitha in a kneeling posture, presenting her works to Emperor Otto the Great in the presence of Archbishop Wilhelm of Mainz.

While dealing with the womanhood of the Ottonian era, it is incumbent upon us to mention the history of a true German type of a royal woman, who has been immortalized by Scheffel in the romance *Ekkehard,* already mentioned: Hadwig, Duchess of Suabia, niece of Otto I., sister of Gerberga, the abbess of Germersheim, the famous connoisseur of the classical authors, and the teacher of Roswitha. Early widowed by Burkhard of Suabia, the young, strong-minded princess of Saxon imperial blood with a firm hand continued the administration of the duchy. "The young widow," as Scheffel paints her, "was of royal disposition and uncommon beauty. But she had a short nose, and the sweet mouth was somewhat disdainfully

puckered up, and her chin projected boldly so that the dimple which becomes woman so sweetly, was not to be found with her. And whose countenance is thus shaped, he bears with a sharp spirit a hard heart in his bosom and his nature inclines to severity. Therefore the duchess, in spite of the bright roses of her cheeks, inspired many a one in her land with a strange terror." Scheffel describes her steel-gray garment which flowed in light waves over the embroidered sandals; this garment clung close to her body; over it was a black tunic reaching down to the knee; in her girdle that encased her hips, shone a precious beryl; a gold-thread embroidered net held her chestnut-brown hair, yet carefully curled locks played around her bright forehead. The boudoir, too, of the illustrious lady of the tenth century is minutely described. On the marble table near the window stood a fantastically formed, dark green vase of polished metal, in which burned a foreign incense and whirled its fragrant white fumes up to the ceiling of the room. The walls were hung with many colored, embroidered rugs.

On the whole, there is in the wide domain of literature scarcely anywhere such a detailed and absolutely accurate picture of the state of the culture and civilization of the tenth century as in this novel. The description of the characters, Hadwig's chamberlain Spazzo, the abbots and monks and warriors, the home industries, the vintage, the life of all the classes of people, the cloisters, the festivals, the Hunnish terror, the virtues and faults of the time, clerical purity and piety and the little and great shortcomings of celibacy, the German Christmas and Easter and Whitsuntide, the German soul (*Gemüt*), the patriarchal relations between the imperial mistress of Otto's blood and her lowliest maidservants pass before our eyes in a charming, ever-changing kaleidoscopic procession. The young widow, in

her lofty castle of the Hohentwiel, whiling away her idle hours in the study of Virgil, with the pure-hearted and scholarly monk Ekkehard, whom she invited from the famed cloister of Saint Gall; Praxedis, the lovely chamberwoman of the duchess, of Greek race, a living souvenir of the time when the son of the Byzantine Emperor Basilius had wooed Hadwig; Hadumoth, the lovely forest flower and the foundling of the lowest stratum of society with her heart of love and truth and beauty, the personification of all that is great and good in the soul of German womanhood of the lower classes; the wood witch, who continues the old beloved custom of worship and loyalty to the old gods, in bitter hate of the new faith that has robbed her of husband, happiness, and child; the servant maid Friderun, tall as a building of several stories, surmounted by a pointed roof,—her pear-shaped head,—whose heart is now desolate, since her sweetheart was slain in the Hunnish battle, and who turns her attention to the solitary Hunnish prisoner, Cappan, whom she domesticates, Christianizes and marries;—all these types of German womanhood are so perfect, so fragrant, so real that the historian of civilization loses heart in attempting to describe other or better types. The love of Hadwig and of Ekkehard, the latter's brief forgetfulness of his and her mission, Ekkehard's trial, his escape and recovery on the snowy Säntis mountain in the Alps, the composition of the Walthari saga in the bracing mountain air, close to the blue heavens, inspired by the Alpine shepherd's godly child, Benedicta, are all episodes worthy of King Solomon's Song of Songs.

After the Ottonian dynasty follow the Franconian emperors, descendants, both through the female line and through marriage, from the Carlovingians and the Ottonians, since Konrad II. (1024–1039), the first Franconian,

was descended from Otto's daughter and married Gisela of Burgundy, a descendant of Charlemagne. Theirs is a period of transition, of struggle between the Papacy and the empire, the preparation for the crusades, fantastic, impolitic expeditions to the Orient for the recovery of the Holy Sepulchre, fostering the spirit of aimless adventure, but, at the same time, widening marvellously the narrow horizon of the European world.

In contrast with the Latin poetry of court and cloister, the humble people cultivated in their own way the German popular love song and the tales that stir the popular soul. From those old folk songs we derive a great deal of our knowledge of the life and love of the women of the time. It is undoubtedly this awakening of the people which stimulated the clerics also to the necessity for preaching in German. An interesting spiritual poetess arises, known as the *Frau Ava,* the recluse and sacred singer, who died in Austria in 1127, and who was the first woman known to us who in poetic German language worked out Biblical and evangelical stories. The naïve tone of her poetry is exemplified in her description of the scene where the enemies of Christ lead the adulteress to Him. Before retiring from the wicked world she had been married, and had had two sons who seem to have been theologians. They furnished her with material for three spiritual poems in which she described, with the inartistic hand of a plain woman, the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost as they are communicated to man and create his virtues; further, she deals with the Antichrist and the Last Judgment.

We must not leave the Frankish-Salian dynasty without mentioning briefly a few superior royal women. Konrad II. found in his consort, Gisela, a beneficent helpmate and also a coadjutor in the affairs of state. To Konrad attaches the particularly characteristic and touching story of the

Women of Weinsberg, which has again and again been made the subject of poems exalting the virtues of the faith and love of German womanhood. When the emperor besieged the city of Weinsberg in Suabia he met with such a stout resistance that he swore in his wrath to slay all those who were able to carry arms. At last when hunger forced surrender, the women appeared in Konrad's camp pleading for mercy, but the emperor permitted them only to take as much of their precious possessions from the doomed city as they could carry on their backs. And behold! next morning when the gates opened, every woman tottered along under the burden of her husband on her shoulders. Konrad's magnates maintained that this was not the meaning of the grace offered to the women, but the emperor, touched by so much loyalty and love, exclaimed: "An Imperial word shall not be distorted by interpretation. The pledge as understood by the Women of Weinsberg shall hold good!"

Konrad and Gisela's great son, Henry III. (1039–1056), who was strong enough to bend and break the power of the Papacy during his brief reign, married Agnes, a princess with a manly soul. She would have saved her minor son, Henry IV. (1056–1106), perhaps the most unfortunate prince who ever wore the thorny crown of the empire, if the perfidious, selfish magnates of the empire had not snatched him by force too early from her motherly and royal care. With the loss of his mother Henry lost the direction and control and he seldom regained it during his long and calamitous reign. At the age of sixteen he was married to Bertha of Savoy (A. D. 1066), to whom he conceived a strange and unmerited aversion, which she overcame in the course of time by her faithfulness and loyalty in times of misfortune. She shared all the sorrows and humiliations inflicted upon him by the haughty magnates of the

realm and especially by the German Pope Hildebrand, Gregory VII., the overtowering personality of his time. But divine providence tried to compensate her for her life of trial and bitterness: she became the mother of Agnes, wife of Frederic of Hohenstaufen, ancestress of that glorious dynasty under which blossomed up the *First Classical Period of Bloom of German Literature and Civilization.*

Of tremendous influence in all states and conditions of women and men is the enforced celibacy of the clergy, an institution due, with all its consequences of good and of evil, to the energy and iron will of Pope Gregory VII. It is true that among the ancient Hebrews the marriage of the high priest, and even of the priests in general, to a divorced woman or to a widow, or, in fact, to any woman not a virgin, had been forbidden. The New Testament, however, knows no such ordinance. Several apostles, especially Saint Peter, were married. The Latin Church, however, since the eighth century, insisted more and more upon the celibacy of the clergy; but, nevertheless, it remained the rule for the clergy in Germany, France, and Upper Italy to be married. During the tenth century the moral decay among the clergy and the fear of its increase, if the ordinances of celibacy were enforced, left priestly marriage undisturbed. But the theory of the greater sanctity of the priestly state, and the mediæval spirit of the mortification of the flesh, as well as the growing conviction that only the sacraments administered by spiritually pure priests without carnal knowledge of woman had a saving grace and force, and prepared the way for the final stroke of entirely abolishing priestly marriage. As the power of the Papacy increased, and as the necessity for an army of instruments severed from the binding ties of family life and consequent dependence upon the secular powers became ever more pressing, the great Gregory VII. ventured

the decisive and final decree of 1074, according to which every married priest who administered the sacrament at the altar, and every layman who accepted it from his hand, should be excommunicated, Amid a fearful storm of protest, the order for priestly celibacy was carried out in Germany. But the overwhelming power of Gregory VII. and the weakness of the emperor, which drove the princes and bishops into the arms of the Pope, lessened the resistance, though for centuries the storm did not subside, and in the north of Germany it continued far into the fourteenth century. Celibacy became a strong weapon in the hands of the Papacy; it subjected the priesthood absolutely to the Church, and withdrew its members from subjection to the secular power; but celibacy did not—at least during the first centuries—redound to a higher morality of the clergy. The complaints of their immorality increased with the firm establishment of celibacy, and after the fourteenth century actually fill the literature of Germany. These complaints are indeed one of the primary forces and agencies in bringing about the great revolution against the Church, known in history as the Reformation. It is no less true, however, that, with the counter reformation within the Ancient Church, a purifying influence was exerted upon the clergy, that the Reformation was to the Church a blessing in disguise, and that—no doubt—celibacy had its redeeming features, inasmuch as it made the genuine, earnest, and honest part of the priesthood pure and independent and fearless in their uplifting mission to the people of the Catholic faith: a true *ecclesia militans*. But celibacy, like any other great institution, is a two-edged sword! One needs only to trace the literary and historical sources of those centuries to become convinced that, on the whole, celibacy was a failure so far as the greater part of the clergy was concerned, and a still greater

failure in so far as it affected the sphere of womanhood. The priestly farces (*Pfaffenschwänke*), the popular wisdom as expressed in hundreds of proverbs and sententious references, as well as the history of the time in question, prove the truth of this assertion and testify to the low moral status of both the clergy and the laity.

Chapter V

The Days of the Minnesingers

V

THE DAYS OF THE MINNESINGERS

WITH the extinction of the Franconian dynasty we approach the golden era of the Hohenstaufen emperors. The ascent of that noble race was due to that German loyalty which they had borne to Henry IV. in his distress. Their home was the lofty Suabian Staufen which towered over the wooded valley of the Rems and looked down on the beautiful land with its vineyards and continuous orchards. The Hohenstaufens belonged to the poetic, highly gifted race of the Suabians from which have sprung some of the greatest German poets and thinkers. Suabia is the cradle of many of the choicest spirits from antiquity down to Schiller and Uhland.

German history during the golden reign of the Hohenstaufen emperors is filled with the deeds of royal women no less than with those of their anointed husbands. Imperial women held the insignia at the death of the emperors. Kunigunde, consort of Henry II., at his death turned over to Konrad II., the first Salian Frank, the insignia of the empire, the crown, the sceptre, and the holy relics which belonged to the regalia; which the last Frank, Henry V. (1106–1125), on his deathbed, intrusted to his consort, requesting her to hand them to his successor, that she might win gratitude and influence; for great weight was attributed to their possession, as they were deemed to

contain mysterious forces and to give to their possessor the favor of the saints. Archbishop Adalbert of Mainz, a cunning politician, induced the widowed empress to deliver the crown jewels to Frederic of Hohenstaufen, and then intrigued for the election of Lothaire the Saxon, who won the crown. At the next vacancy Konrad of Hohenstaufen (1138–1152) was elected, and founded the great Suabian dynasty. During its governance (1138–1254) the Germanic body politic displayed the highest degree of energy, and with that dynasty began and ended the most glorious period of mediæval German social life and literature. By the magnificence of their rule, the Suabian emperors, in spite of many and great political errors, through which they exhausted much of their strength in Italian wars, carried the romanticism of the Middle Ages to its zenith. In the same proportion in which the nation was raised by a knowledge of its own power, the national productions of art and letters were stamped with a bold and original character. Great men of extraordinary genius arose to exalt their own names with the glories of the empire.

The Roman expeditions of Frederick Barbarossa, who sought to restore the grandeur of Charlemagne, and of Otto the Great brought to Germany a new, original culture that took a place beside the old Latin, monkish, scholarly culture, with its gloomy clericalism. Chivalry, courtliness, the "gay science" of the Romance peoples, were grafted upon a knotty, rugged, but intensely healthy trunk. The very foundation of the new society stood in contrast with the ascetic gloom of the former church philosophy. The highest praise was now to be "gay and joyous in chaste moderation"; life, vigor, beauty, courtly elegance in form and countenance and speech marked the gentleman and the lady of the age. The eye was delighted by beautiful features and lovely expression; by stately appearance,

fine movements, harmonious rhythm and dance, by splendid processions and courtly functions. Grace, charm, and loveliness were ardently sought: the commonplace and the vulgar were avoided as rustic and ridiculous.

The Hohenstaufens are the impersonation of romantic chivalry. There is in all of them, especially in Frederick II. (1212–1250), a profound romantic tendency, a thirst for heroic greatness, glory, immortality. A vein of poetry pulses through their history, "to develop which—says Scherr—will be reserved perhaps to some future German Shakespeare." The power of Frederick Barbarossa (1152–1190) raised the nation to an intellectual elevation which created imperishable works of art and poetry. Glorious, though fruitless expeditions to Italy and crusades to the Orient extended mightily the limited horizon of the Germans: Southern and Oriental beauty penetrated the monachism of the North. The Italian and Sicilian courts of Frederick II. were thronged with the fairest ladies of Orient and Occident. Saracen beauties were intermingled with the loveliest women of the German and Roman and Greek world. All were bent upon gallantry, and song and poetry were the common accomplishments. The Orient once more fertilized the Occident; the fulness of Oriental fancy and symbolism poured over the Germans romance, wisdom and love, passion and vice, and cast a roseate bloom over the coarse actuality of the death struggle between Empire and Papacy, idealizing the "blood and iron" services of German warriors on Southern and Eastern battlefields.

The struggle for the Holy Sepulchre blended Christian monachism and Christian chivalry in the spiritual orders: the Knights Templars, the Knights of Saint John, the Teutonic Order. Their holy vows taken in the presence of ladies and princes "to honor and defer to the Church, to

be true and obedient to the sovereign or feudal lord, to conduct no unjust feud, to defend widows and orphans," characterize sufficiently the ideal of their mission. The rules of honor are laid down in the new word *Courtoisie,* an essential part of which is devotion and service to ladies. Nevertheless, this service to ladies has a religious root: it is but the evolution to its final consequence of the old German veneration for women which Christianity crystallized in the cult of the Holy Virgin Mary. Religion is greatly dependent upon the emotions, thus making even this cult more sensuous than rational. Inasmuch as this religious affection is transferred to the entire sex, we find the most beautiful side of knighthood expressed and codified in the *Minnedienst,* or love service. And, in so far as the delight of youthful life and feeling was considered as dependent upon the life of nature in general, the subject of the minnesongs dealt with love within the natural environment of fields and forests, rivers and mountains, spring and flowers, winter and ice. "In the month of May," runs Freytag's beautiful description, "when the trees were adorned with foliage, and the heath with flowers, when the birds sang, and the brooks, freed from ice and snow, trickled through the meadows, then began also for the courtly man the sunny time of joy. Then he prepared his arms and armour, thought of adornment and fine garments, and wandered away for love-wooing, to repasts, to wedding and tournament, or to earnest war to acquire honor or to serve his chosen lady, or to win estates. But when the winter approached, the little birds migrated away, the meadows faded, the leaves sank from the trees, frost hovered about the burgh, then the joyful activity in the district terminated, the German knight retired to the interior of the house, lived honorably with wife and children and dreamed golden dreams in the hope of the

next awakening of life." This conception of a dualism of human life, a serene, sunny side, and a cold twilight pervades the entire chivalrous poetry. It is but a realization of the dualism of the human soul, as Goethe has wonderfully expressed it in his *Faust:*

"Two souls alas! reside within my breast,
And each withdraws from, and repels, its brother.
One with tenacious organs holds in love
And clinging lust the world in its embraces;
The other strongly sweeps, this dust above,
Into the high ancestral places.

. . . . . .

Yet in each soul is born the pleasure
Of yearning onward, upward and away,
When o'er our heads, lost in the vaulted azure,
The lark sends down his flickering lay."

The fantastic devotion to woman and the love for her at the time of the Minnesingers thus changed the entire life of the Teutonic race. Woman became the centre of the rich animated social circle. The love of woman controlled the hearts of the ruling class and the imagination of the poets. Her power in state, court, and home was firmly rooted and remained great, even though the golden sheen and glimmer of the period of the minnesong vanished after a few generations. Her legal status, too, was raised; she became equal, and in many respects superior, to man. If the basis of her existence was the house, the family, she was the ruler of the units of which the fabric of the state is composed. The sacred flame of the hearth was nourished by her; the children were in her safekeeping; in her eye and heart rested the blessing or the curse of home and state.

The love of woman, the life of *minne,* during that epochal era shines most brightly, though idealized, in the greatest lyric and epic poets Germany ever produced.

True poetry is, after all, the highest truth. To describe woman's life and love in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, we cannot do better than view her reflection in the mirror of that poetry of which she is the almost exclusive subject. The minnesong is the especial history of women. Elevation and degeneracy appear as clearly in poetry as in life. Woman, wine, and the eternal laws of nature are the essence of poetry. Poetry, on the whole, is the history of love in all its aspects, and *minne* is especially the soul of the Middle High German poetry, which, in spite of its brilliancy, is, alas! too self-confined in this one, though supreme, all-pervading emotion.

In this respect, German minnesong is quite different from that of the Provençal troubadours, who sing also warlike strains of patriotism, of the sweet and glorious death for the fatherland, of revolution against an overbearing Church or political tyranny. Among the German minnesingers, Walter von der Vogelweide alone, the greatest of all, sings in the same strain.

Onesided as the subject of that period is, its modulations are varied. There is the language of the pensive heart, of the gay boundings of hope and happiness, of cheerfulness and melancholy, of depth of feeling, of buoyant spirits, and again there is a dirge bewailing a lover's fate in tones that breathe mystic feelings.

We cannot, therefore, agree with the harsh judgment of the great Schiller regarding the Minnesingers: "If the sparrows should ever chance to think of writing or publishing an almanack of love and friendship, we might bet ten to one that it would be composed pretty much in the same manner. What a poverty of ideas in these minnesingers! A garden, a tree, a hedge, a forest, and a sweetheart!—quite right! somewhat such are the objects which have a place in the head of a sparrow. And the flowers,

they exhale! and the spring comes, and the winter goes, and nothing remains—but ennui!"

The minnesongs of the greatest masters, nevertheless, whose treasures were unearthed after Schiller's time, enable us to form a true and vivid estimate of the regard in which women were held when this poetry flourished. Wolfram von Eschenbach sings the sorrows of unrequited love:

"Would I that lofty spirit melt
Of that proud dame that dwells so high,
Kind heaven must aid me, or unfelt
By her will be its agony.
Joy in my soul no place can find:
As well might I a suitor be
To thunderbolts, as hope her mind
Will turn in softer mood to me.

"Those cheeks are beautiful, are bright
As the red rose with dewdrops grac'd;
And faultless is the lovely light
Of those dear eyes, that, on me plac'd,
Pierce to my very heart, and fill
My soul with love's consuming fires,
While passion burns and reigns at will;
So deep a love that fair inspires!

"But joy upon her beauteous form
Attends, her hues so bright to shed
O'er those red lips, before whose warm
And beaming smile all care is fled.
She is to me all light and joy,
I faint, I die, before her frown;
Even Venus, liv'd she yet on earth,
A fairer goddess here must own."

The longing for a distant, hard-hearted, beloved lady is expressed by Heinrich von Morungen in tones worthy of the best traditions of the Greek lyric poets:

"My lady dearly loves a pretty bird,
That sings and echoes back her gentle tone;
Were I, too, near her, never should be heard
A songster's note more pleasant than my own;

Sweeter than sweetest nightingale I'd sing.
For thee, my lady fair,
This yoke of love I bear,
Deign thou to comfort me and ease my sorrowing.

"Were but the troubles of my heart by her
Regarded, I would triumph in my pain;
But her proud heart stands firmly, and the stir
Of passionate grief o'ercomes not her disdain.
Yet, yet I do remember how before
My eyes she stood, and spoke,
And on her gentle look
My earnest gaze was fix'd; O were it so once more!"

Another Minnesinger, Kristan von Hamle, is an exponent of romantic love:

"Would that the meadow could speak!
And then would it truly declare
How happy was yesterday,
When my lady was there:
When she pluck'd its flowers, and gently prest
Her lovely feet on its verdant breast.

"Meadow! what transport was thine,
When my lady walked across thee;
And her white hands pluck'd the flowers;
Those beautiful flowers that emboss thee!
Oh, suffer me, then, thou bright green sod,
To set my feet where my lady trod!"

And again, Master Hadlaub, the last of the line of true Minnesingers, at the end of the thirteenth century:

"I saw yon' infant in her arms carest,
And as I gazed on her my pulse beat high;
Gently she clasp'd him to her snowy breast,
While I, in rapture lost, stood musing by;
Then her white hands around his neck she flung,
And prest him to her lips, and tenderly
Kiss'd his fair cheek as o'er the babe she hung.
. . . . . .
"Straight she was gone; and then that lovely child
Ran joyfully to meet my warm embrace:
Then fancy with fond thoughts my soul beguiled;

It was herself! O dream of love and grace!
I clasp'd him, where her gentle hands had prest,
I kissed each spot which bore her lips' sweet trace,
And joy the while went bounding through my breast."

The minnesong reached its climax of perfection in Walter von der Vogelweide, who is unsurpassed, even by Goethe, as a lyric poet. The following dancing song is typical of his work:

"Lady, I said, this garland wear!
For thou wilt wear it gracefully;
And on thy brow 't will sit so fair;
And thou wilt dance so light and free;
Had I a thousand gems, on thee,
Fair one! their brilliant light should shine:
Would'st thou such gift accept from me,—
O doubt me not, it should be thine.

"Lady, so beautiful thou art,
That I on thee the wreath bestow,
'Tis the best gift I can impart;
But whiter, rosier flow'rs I know,
Upon the distant plain they're springing,
Where beauteously their heads they rear,
And birds their sweetest songs are singing:
Come! let us go and pluck them there.

"She took the beauteous wreath I chose,
And like a child at praises glowing,
Her cheeks blush'd crimson as the rose
When by the snow-white lily growing;
But all from those bright eyes eclipse
Receiv'd; and then, my toil to pay,
Kind, precious words fell from her lips;
What more than this I shall not say."

Minnesong represented at first, and during its growth, purity in love, and profound respect for noble womanhood. Goethe's word: "Wilt thou in life know what is seemly, inquire it of noble women," is fully realized. We like to dwell on this phase of our theme, for soon we shall have to descend to the very depths of corruption and impurity.

If we had not the chronological records of history, it would be hard to believe that a nation could be swept by a century of religious wars from the ideals set forth in minnesong to the degeneracy that characterized the "Era of Desolation."

But in the early days of minnesong, modesty, chastity, and measure or moderation (*diu mâze*) are concomitants of the ideal of womanhood. Love is then the extinction of self. Walter von der Vogelweide says: "True minne never entered false hearts!"

Even Gottfried von Strassburg, the poet of passion and sensual love, in this respect the very counterpart of Walter von der Vogelweide, sings:

"Of all the things of this our World,
On which the golden sunlight shines,
Not one is blessed as a wife
That vows her life and body sweet
And manners also to measure refined."

Measure, like the Greek *kalokagathia* of a gentleman, implies the harmony and the development of all the inner and outer virtues and charms. The sacredness of the relations between the sexes is originally almost of a religious nature. The lady of the knight's heart and the Holy Virgin are strangely blended.

There are among the lyrics of the Minnesingers many which are devoted entirely to religious topics, especially the glory of the Virgin, a specimen of which may here be given:

"Maria! Virgin! mother! comforter
Of sinners; queen of saints in heav'n that are!
Thy beauty round the eternal throne dost cast
A brightness that outshines its living rays:
There in the fulness of transcendent joy
Heaven's king and thou sit in bright majesty:
Would I were there, a welcom'd guest at last
Where angel tongues reëcho praise to praise!

There Michael sings the blessed Saviour's name
Till round the eternal throne it rings once more,
And angels in their choirs with glad acclaim,
Triumphant host, their joyful praises pour:
There thousand years than days more short appear,
Such joy from God doth flow and from that mother dear."

The eternal longing for the divine then melts mysteriously into the longing for the youthful love of woman. This longing is perhaps nowhere in literature expressed with more touching, more naïve delicacy than by Gottfried when he has fair Sigune speak to Herzeloide concerning her Schionatulander whom she loved as ever woman loved man, and who was then absent in war:

"For the loved friend is all my spying;
From the window on the road, over heather and bright meadows—
All in vain; I espy him not:
Alas! my eyes by tears must dearly pay for longing love.

"From the window do I ascend to the battlement,
And spy eastward, westward, after tidings from him,
Who long ere this has conquered all my soul;
Count me among old lovers, for my love abides.

'When I then on wild tides glide in my boat,
My eyes glance over thirty miles away,
If I may find such tidings
As would free me from sad longing for my bright young friend.

"Where is my joy? Why has departed
Lofty spirit from my heart?
Pain and woe expelled our peace;
I would gladly suffer for him, if I suffered but alone,
Yet I know sweet longing draws him hither, though he must be far.

"Woe to me! How *can* he come? All too far is my true one.
For him I shudder now in cold, now burn in fire.
Thus Schionatulander makes me glow,
His love kindles me as Agremontin does the Salamander."

Yet whether lofty or earthly, platonic or ardent, the centre of the lyrics of the Minnesingers is always the

relation of the sexes. The manner of giving expression to the "eternal feelings"—as Goethe calls them—varies according to the desire, the hope, or the hopelessness of the lover. The lady is entreated for grace (*Huld*); she encourages the knight or keeps him at a distance; love ceases to be pure, feelings become fantastically exaggerated; the veneration of woman becomes morbid, sometimes even senseless; love is often allegorized; a magic charm envelops the singer; the world surrounding him is changed, his nature passes the natural bounds; melancholy, ever the legacy of German nature even in the midst of joy, prompts the desire that the epitaph on his tomb should record how faithful he was to his lady. He dreams, perchance, that a rose tree with two blooming branches embraces him and interprets the dream as a fulfilment of his secret desire. This fantastic unnaturalness of the super-realization of love had a demoralizing effect upon both men and women: it developed mock lovers and mock love.

Thus the love cult gradually degenerated. This was especially due to the fact that married women were in most cases the object of *minne*. French customs and thought entered more and more into German life. When the consummation of love appeared hopeless because of obstacles of a moral or social nature, the lovers, perchance, indulged themselves in a perverse mutual satisfaction of a puerile nature, such as the exchange of their undergarments for a night. Wolfram von Eschenbach relates that Gahmuret used to wear the shirt of his beloved Herzeloide over his armor in battle.

With the development of heraldry, the knight wore the colors of his lady love. He fought in tournament of real war for his lady. Frequently ladies imposed services and even hard and dangerous exploits upon their importuning

lovers, either to test their love, or for the sake of sensation, or even to keep obstinate lovers at a distance. We must not believe that the knights went out cheerfully. "Let no one inquire," says Hartmann von der Aue, "after the cause of my journey. I confess frankly: love bade me to vow the crusade and now commands me to undertake the journey. It cannot be helped, and an oath must not be broken. Many a one boasts of what he has done from love, but where are deeds? I hear only words. . . . This is love indeed, if one for its sake expatriates himself. Behold, how it drives me from home! Truly, if Sultan Saladin still lived and all his army, they would not move me one pace from Franconia! Yet only the body crosses the sea, the heart remains behind with the beloved one."

But the reward of love (*Minnesold*) is always kept in view. In the rarest cases it consists in an ideal satisfaction, except perhaps if the lady is of a very high rank and birth. Generally, however, it is real sensuality. The descent of morality can be gauged from the fact that it was not unusual for a lady to permit her lover to pass a night in her arms, upon the condition that he might not touch her impurely without her express consent. Perhaps a bare sword was placed between the two lovers as a guard of good behavior. Hartmann von der Aue defends the practice in *Iwein:* "If any one declare it a wonder that Iwein lay so near a strange maiden without indulging in love, he knows not that a strong man can abstain from anything he chooses to abstain." In fact, the custom of a common couch became well-nigh a national German institution, as it was called "Beilager upon truth and faith." Among German peasants of certain sections—says Weinhold—this *Beilager* continues to this very day; but it is considered as a real betrothal. There is a small literature in existence on the "nights of proof" (*Probenächte*) of German maidens.

Yet in general the heads of families were not so accommodating regarding the young female members of their household. We learn of a class of "watchers" or spies (*Merker*) whose mission it was to watch over the honor of the maidens. A whole crop of poetry, the so-called watch songs, sprang up, dealing with the subject. The business of the clandestine lover is to escape from the snares and the watchfulness of those spies.

The following example of a watch song, of a high literary and poetic value, is typical:

"I heard before the dawn of day
The watchman loud proclaim:—
'If any knightly lover stay
In secret with his dame,
Take heed, the sun will soon appear;
Then fly, ye knights, your ladies dear,
Fly ere the daylight dawn.

"'Brightly gleams the firmament,
In silvery splendor gay;
Rejoicing that the night is spent,
The lark salutes the day;
Then fly, ye lovers, and be gone!
Take leave before the night is done,
And jealous eyes appear.'

"That watchman's call did wound my heart,
And banish my delight;
Alas, the envious sun will part
Our loves, my lady bright.
On me she looked with downcast eyes,
Despairing at my mournful cry,
'We tarry here too long.'

"Straight to the wicket did she speed;
'Good watchman, spare thy joke!
Warn not my love, till o'er the mead
The morning sun has broke:
Too short, alas! the time, since here
I tarried with my leman dear,
In love and converse sweet.'

"'Lady, be warn'd! on roof and mead
The dew drops glitter gay;
Then quickly bid thy leman speed,
Nor linger till the day;
For by the twilight did I mark
Wolves hying to their covert dark,
And stags to covert fly.'

"Now by the rising sun I view'd
In tears my lady's face;
She gave me many a token good,
And many a soft embrace.
Our parting bitterly we mourn'd;
The hearts which erst with rapture burn'd,
Were cold with woe and care.

"A ring with glittering ruby red,
Gave me that lady sheen,
And with me from the castle sped
Along the meadow green:
And whilst I saw my leman bright,
She waved on high her kerchief white:
'Courage! to arms!' she cried.

"In the raging fight each pennon white
Reminds me of her love;
In the field of blood, with mournful mood,
I see her kerchief move;
Through foes I hew, whene'er I view
Her ruby ring, and blithely sing,
'Lady, I fight for thee.'"

The end of wooing is thus always understood to be the gratification of passion. But many ladies of the era of chivalry were extremely exacting, and imposed heavy tasks for the attainments of the prize which they alone could bestow. They allowed very slight favors at first, a glance, a trifle, otherwise they let the lover long and languish, as, for instance, in the case of the knight Ulrich von Lichtenstein, whom we shall soon consider more closely. Sometimes, however, favors which by modern

standards would appear very improper were readily granted with a charming naïveté! The lover was allowed to accompany the lady of his heart to her bed chamber, and wait upon her and help her undress, a rather crucial service, as the mediæval custom was to sleep without any garments at all.

Weinhold calls *minne* the crown jewel of the German language, the love which rests in the soul; but it also had its shameful history of debasement, and finally met its death when the sensual prevailed over the spiritual, when *minne* became lust. Reinmar von Zweter could well say: "*Minne* is the gilding of love, a treasure above all virtue —a teacher of pure morals, companion of chastity and fidelity, the noblest thing that is in the world, to which only woman can be compared. *Minne* flees from the fool, associates with the wise; *minne* strengthens honor, truth, and modesty." At the era of decadence of chivalry, however, *minne* came to mean sexual enjoyment *par excellence*.

The life of love in the high society of Germany—for the lower gentry, according to Scherr, lived in their narrow, miserably equipped burgh stalls on a very low level—became, in the course of time, a perfectly developed art and science; and Weinhold firmly believes that the high-born lords and ladies at the German courts dialectically treated interesting themes of love which may have had the forms of real courts of love, in imitation of the French *Cour d'Amour*. It is true, however, that some great Romance scholars deny their existence altogether. This seems erroneous. We know that Queen Alinora (Eleanor), the ill-famed consort of Henry II. (1154–1204), after her French divorce, was a high authority in love affairs. Schiller in *The Maid of Orleans* described the nature and character of such a *Cour d'Amour*.

It is but natural that the *minne* of a knight was not always smooth sailing: his springtide feelings were frequently tossed on the sea of his lady's caprice; longing and suspense, "heaven-high exultation and sadness unto death,"—to use Clärchen's words in Goethe's *Egmont,*—held him in a constant state of agitation. Tannhäuser charmingly satirizes woman's whims. She demands impossible things of her foolish suitor, who is ever ready to serve: she asks him to have the Rhône River flow past Nürnberg; to turn the Danube back toward the Rhine; or to build an ivory palace, wheresoever she will, in the midst of a lake; or to bring her the light of the moon; the salamander from the fire, or from Galilee the mountain upon which Adam sat; in recompense of which she will bless him with her sweet love! "If I bring her the great tree from India, or the Holy Grail, which Parsifal guarded, or the apple which Paris adjudicated to Venus, or the magic mantle which fits only faithful ladies, or the ark of Noah from which he sent the doves,—she will fulfill my most ardent desires! Alas, the sharp rod was kept too far away from her when a child!"

Some knights and Minnesingers console themselves by choosing other subjects for their songs, spurning the intolerable demands of their exacting mistresses, and their too expensive charms—we need only recall that unmerciful lady who dropped her glove from the gallery between the lion and the tiger, and lovingly invited her knight to pick it up for her. The knight having accomplished the feat, threw the glove in the pretty face that welcomed his return, with the words: "Thanks, lady, I do not desire." But the majority became Don Quixotes and allowed themselves to be played with and mocked by their whimsical taskmasters.

From the sunny south, the Provence, the home of minstrels and songs, we learn how the troubadour Pierre

Vidal of Toulouse fell desperately in love with Loba of Carcasses. As her name was Loba (she-wolf), he called himself Lop, encased himself in a wolf's skin and roamed, wolflike, through the mountains. Shepherds and dogs misunderstood the joke and tore him almost to pieces.

In Germany we meet with an extraordinary type of a knight-errant in the person of the noble Ulrich von Lichtenstein (died January 6, 1275 or 1276), who spent a long life in the self-imposed service of a capricious princess. During his long career of *minne* service, which, however, never brought him fulfilment of his desires, he committed one folly after the other, and, worst of all, he was never cured of his passion, though he often pathetically sings his misfortunes and the cruelty of his lady. He was no mean singer, and his poetry is a most interesting human document.

At the time of the purple bloom of Middle High German civilization, or when it first began to fade, Ulrich von Lichtenstein was a boy. Under his parental roof he heard and absorbed the epics of the romantic school of his time, and learned to appreciate the worth of a nobleman by his chivalrous aspiration for the grace of a high born lady. As a page of twelve years he was overwhelmed at the sight of a brilliant princess, very likely Agnes of Meran, the future consort of Frederick the Warlike. His youthful love was inflamed to such ardor by the alluring beauty of the queen of his heart that "he carried secretly away the water wherewith she had washed her white hands and drank it out of sheer love." But while he vowed chivalrous service and songs to the sun of his life, he married a gentlewoman who became the mother of his children. At the court of the marquis Henry of Istria he was still more confirmed in his adulation of woman. But his poetry in the "Ladies' Book" (*Frauenbuch*) and his poetic messages to the queen of his heart betray not only an exaggerated

love, but also the qualities of charity, bravery, honor. Von Lichtenstein's description of his own interesting life is due not to his self-love, but, as he tells us, "to the pure, sweet, much beloved lady." It is true that pure, sweet lady is capricious and cruel enough; for example, she invites her paladin to mingle among the lepers who assembled before her castle; promising as a reward to appoint an hour for a nocturnal visit and the fulfilment of his desires. But his exposure to a disgusting malady serves him to no purpose.

Even religion is subordinated by Von Lichtenstein to his lady love. He is not especially anxious for a pilgrimage across the sea, unless his lady so orders. He reproaches ladies for their nun-like costume, and says: "Alas, when you ought to go to dance with us, you are seen standing by the church."

His wishes for wealth are concentrated in five things: "fine women, good food, beautiful horses, good garments, brilliant armour." Von Lichtenstein calls himself blest that "his senses are intent to love her, to love her more and more." He hopes that in her goodness the good, dear, "pure" lady will reward his constancy more graciously than heretofore with the fulfilment of his wishes. Comfort and joy he has only in her, the fair one, the bright one, in her laughter. "When he is reflected in her playing eyes, his high mind blossoms like the roses at May time." "He would rather dwell in his lady's heart than in heaven itself."

But real madness begins when, to please his lady, he has a painful operation performed on his lip; on another occasion he cuts off his little finger and sends it to her in a precious box. The lady is astonished that any man can make such a fool of himself. And yet we learn incidentally that Ulrich has a good wife and dear children at home

whom he visits when his knight-errantry carries him past his ancestral castle. He lives with his wife during the wintry days, he mentions her housewifely virtues in his poetry, she nurses him when he returns, perchance, sick and injured by his mocking-bird of a lady who, promising him sweet fulfilment, has him drawn up in a sheet to the window of her castle, and then prevents his entering by causing him to be dropped fifty feet into the moat. A strange chapter, truly, in the history of human folly and perversity!

It is pleasant to record that this kind of chivalry and love service found no welcome among the North Germans or Scandinavians. In their poetry that is left to us we find none of the degenerated, effeminate sensuality of the Romance and South German *courtoisie*. True German character does not permit the profound feelings of real affection to pass into publicity. Love is purer and more genuine; women stand on no imaginary, fantastic pinnacle, but are, on that account, really freer and nobler. The higher that women are raised to the domain of unreality and unnaturalness, the lower is generally their moral standard. This explains the fact that among civilized nations morality is always highest in the middle classes of society. Among the poorest and lowliest, alas! the demon of physical hunger, the moloch of distress, when there is frequently nothing for sale but womanly honor, militate against innate virtue.

A beautiful example of woman's gratitude toward a singer of her virtues must here be recorded. When Heinrich von Meissen, called *Frauenlob* (Women's Praise) from his glorification of the fair sex, died, A. D. 1317, at Mainz, he was magnificently entombed in the hallway of the Cathedral. The ladies of Mainz carried the bier of the deceased minnesinger with loud lamentations and mourning

to his grave, and poured upon it such an abundance of wine that it flowed through the entire expanse of the church. Heinrich had indeed well deserved the women's special affection, as he had glorified the Holy Virgin, and given new place in the language to the ancient term *Frau* (the joygiver), that had been supplanted by *Weib*. The fame of Frauenlob has been perpetuated by German womanhood; in 1842 a monument, by Schwanthaler, was erected in his honor by the ladies of the city, in the cloisters of the Cathedral, where he is buried. The grave itself is still marked by a copy, made in 1783, of the original tombstone.

A few words about the education of a woman of noble birth may not be amiss. The difficult arts of writing and reading were more generally acquired by noble ladies than by their knights. While the great Wolfram von Eschenbach, though possessing all the social culture of his time, could not read, and Ulrich von Lichtenstein had to keep an epistle of his lady unread for ten days, as his secretary was absent, ladies generally studied those branches which appear to us now quite rudimentary. Heinrich von Veldeke, we learn, lent the manuscript of his *Eneit,* before it was quite finished, to the Countess of Cleve, to read and to see (*i. e.*, the pictures).

The noble maidens, whose instructors were usually the castle chaplains, learned early to sing minnesongs, to sing and say the ancient sagas and legends; they often even composed songs and poems; they learned music, which was part of a liberal education, played the fiddle, zither, and harp. Isolde, according to Gottfried von Strassburg, knew Irish, French, Latin, and played the Welsh fiddle. Fine handiwork belonged to a noble lady's occupations. The laws of courtesy were, as we have mentioned, codified into a perfect science for use under all conditions: at

the court, at home, at the dance and play, on the street, to control conduct toward high and low, men and women; minute directions were provided for all occasions. Even the conversation in society, at the banquet table, is prescribed; noble ladies must show grace and measure in the favorite ball play, ride horseback, chase with falcons, blush, and nod their heads courteously at the tournaments. The reception of guests and their hospitable entertainment is their business, and the social *savoir-faire* constitutes ladylike *courtoisie* or *moralitas*. Religion toward God and the world, churchgoing, all are strictly regulated; and we see women in all their aspects, as we pass in review the vast literature of the time. The arts of adornment, of painting the cheeks and lips, are highly developed; the men seem to have been even more eager to adorn and decorate their persons than were the women. Male garments are adorned with symbolic colors; coats of arms of silk embroidery appear on the most ridiculous parts of knightly dress. Superficiality and superstition widely prevail. There is a strong belief in magic or love potions, as we learn, *e. g.*, from a bit of poetry by Veldeke:

"No thanks to Tristan that his heart had been
Faithful and true unto his queen;
For thereto did a potion move
More than the power of love:
Sweet thought to me,
That ne'er such cup my lips have prest;
Yet deeper love, than ever he
Conceived, dwells in my breast:
So may it be!
So constant may it rest!
Call me but thine
As thou art mine!"

The knightly dwelling, that is, the palace or castle of a lord, with a watch tower outside, rising above the strong

wall and separated from the other dwellings, had always —distinct from it—a ladies' house, called "the women's secret" (*der frouven heimliche*), or the *kemenate*. This consisted of at least three rooms: one for the familiar intercourse of the family; this was also the sleeping chamber of the lady of the house; one, a room where the lady devoted herself, with her women, to the female occupations of the time; and lastly, the sleeping room for the maidservants. In each *kemenate* there were, usually, a kitchen, a chapel, cellars, and provision rooms. Arched niches in the wall gave opportunity to the ladies to look far overland. The furniture was rich, and often finely carved, but of heavy and clumsy pattern. Tables, chairs, and chests were abundantly provided. The bed was a large, square, high piece of furniture, and it was treated with great care and respect; it was covered with elaborate curtains, which hung from a silken canopy; heavy feather beds and fine linen were the pride of the highborn housewife.

Food was plentiful, but plain. Field and forest furnished the principal dishes: game, bread, vegetables. On festivals, delicacies and highly spiced dishes in great number burdened the table. Wine, beer, cider, and fruit brandies were drunk in large quantities. It is highly suggestive to read in the records the allowances of liquor made to princely ladies of the time and to their noble attendants. We forbear furnishing statistics from the records, which may seem to our time slanderous exaggerations.

The ideal of womanly beauty as established by the poets of the romance when knighthood was in flower is as follows: to be considered beautiful a woman must be of moderate stature, of slender and graceful build, of symmetrical and well-developed form. Out of the white

countenance the cheeks must blossom forth like bedewed roses; the mouth must be small, closed, and sweetly breathing, the teeth shine forth from swelling red lips, "like ermine from scarlet"; a round cheek with snow-white dimple must heighten the charm of the mouth. The ideal nose was not Grecian, long, or pointed, or stumped, but straight and normal. Long eyebrows, a little curved, the color of which slightly contrasted with that of the hair, were praised. The eyes must be clear, pure, limpid like sunshine, preëminently blue or of that indefinite changing color which we note in some species of birds. The Oriental ideal of "the black eyes' spark is like God's ways,—dark" is not acceptable to the mediæval Teuton. The hair was preferably of that golden blond which did not contrast too strongly with the snow-white, blue veined temples and the mild blue lustre of the eyes. A slender neck, a firm and plastic bust of moderate fulness, strong hips, round, white arms, long, slender fingers, straight legs, small, well-arched feet, must not be wanting. There are, of course, constant variations of that ideal according to the æsthetic views and the sensuous predilections of the love singers. In the late Middle Ages the womanly ideal of beauty becomes materialized and merely sensual: the different parts of woman's form are brought together from the various lands according to the particular local reputation for womanly beauty. Among the hundreds of types, Konrad Fleck's description of Blancheflur may be mentioned: gold shining hair fell around her temples, which were whiter than snow; fine straight eyebrows arched above her eyes, the power of which conquered everybody; her cheeks and lips were red and white, her teeth ivory, her throat and neck were those of the swan; her bosom was full, her limbs were long and slender, her waist was tender and delicate.

This detail painting of womanly beauty by the Minnesingers is a great advance over the descriptions given by the epic poets, which deal mostly in poetic generalities. A minnesong type is given in this description of the appearance of Kriemhilde:

"Now came that lady bright,
And as the rosy morn
Dispels the misty clouds,
So he who long had borne
Her image in his heart,
Did banish all his care,
And now before his eyes
Stood forth that lady fair.

"From her embroider'd vest
There glittered many a gem,
While o'er her lovely cheek
The rosy red did beam;
Whoe'er in raptur'd thought
Had imag'd lady bright,
Confess'd that lov'lier maid
Ne'er stood before his sight.

"And as the beaming moon
Rides high the stars among,
And moves with lustre mild
The mirky clouds along;
So, midst her maiden throng,
Uprose that matchless fair;
And higher swell'd the soul
Of many a hero there."

Most expressive of popular feeling toward woman is, perhaps, the ballad and folklore poetry of a people. Though preserved mostly without date or name they breathe national sentiment most faithfully. True folk-songs would betray the nationality from which they sprang even though the language did not. All the characteristics of the German *Gemüt* (mood, soul, sentiment, and longing strangely blended) exhale from songs like the following:

"Sweet nightingale, thyself prepare,
The morning breaks, and thou must be
My faithful messenger to her,
My best beloved, who waits for thee.

"She in her garden for thee stays,
And many an anxious thought will spring,
And many a sigh her breast will raise,
Till thou good tidings from me bring.

"So speed thee up, nor longer stay;
Go forth with gay and frolic song;
Bear to her heart my greetings,—say
That I myself will come ere long.

"And she will greet thee many a time,
'Welcome, dear nightingale!' will say;
And she will ope her heart to thee,
And all its wounds of love display.

"Sore piercèd by love's shafts is she,
Thou then the more her grief assail;
Bid her from every care be free:
Quick! haste away, my nightingale!"

Even more naïve and lovely is perhaps this gem:

"If a small bird I were,
And little wings might bear,
I'd fly to thee:
But vain those wishes are;
Here then my rest shall be.

"When far from thee I bide,
In dreams still at thy side
I've talked with thee;
And when I woke, I sigh'd,
Myself alone to see.

"No hour of wakeful night
But teems with thoughts of light—
Sweet thoughts of thee—
As when in hours more bright,
Thou gav'st thy heart to me."

But in whatever sense the chivalry and minnesong were conceived, they certainly turned toward worldliness. The struggle of the Papacy against the Empire was accompanied by a struggle of the clergy against the knighthood. The clerics attempted to turn the warlike and passionate instincts of the time in the direction of spiritual things. An immense number of holy legends of good women resulted, the ideals of which were humility, self-abnegation, and chastity; we have the legend of Crescentia, a pure woman, who, accused like Saint Genevieve, is at last justified and saved; others die for their virtue, and are sanctified; the story of Lucretia of ancient Roman memory is revived in the style of contemporary court life, where she appears as a white raven.

This spirit of religious revival appears most strongly in a versified story of the thirteenth century, related by Konrad von Würzburg in a work entitled *Frau Welt* (Lady World):

Wirent von Grafenberg, a Franconian knight, a romancer, and a man of the world, strove incessantly for worldly goods and honors. He was handsome, well educated, brilliant, a good hunter, player, and musician, loved by the ladies and ever ready to serve them; whenever there was a tournament, no matter how far, there he rode to win the minne-prize. It was love, and love alone, that filled all his senses. One day he sat in his chamber, passing his time in the perusal of a love romance until evening. All at once the dusky room brightened up in wonderful radiance, and a marvellously beauteous woman entered; she was more lovely than any earthly woman, than Venus or Pallas; she was clad with splendor, and a golden crown was upon her head. In spite of all her magnificence, Wirent became pale from fright. "Do not be frightened; I am indeed the woman for whose sake thou

hast frequently risked life and limbs, whose faithful servant thou wert, of whom thou hast said and sung so much good; thou bloometh like a twig of May in manifold merits; thou hast from thy childhood worn the wreath of honor; now I have come to bestow thy reward upon thee." "Forgive, noble lady, if I have served thee, I do not know it; but tell me who thou art!" "I shall gladly tell thee; thou needest not be ashamed of having served me; I am served by emperors, kings, princes, counts, freemen. I fear no one but God, he is more powerful than I am. My name is *Lady World*. Thou shalt now have the reward which thou hast wished for so long: look at it!"

With these words, she turned her back. It was full of snakes and vipers and toads, of ulcers and sores, wherein flies and ants teemed and vermin crept. An abominable stench arose; her rich silken dress looked ash pale; and thus she went hence. But Wirent von Grafenberg, the spoiled child of the *World,* perceived the perdition of the soul in the service of the world; he left wife and children and the pleasures of the world, took the Cross, fought against the heathen, atoned for his sins, and obtained divine forgiveness and eternal bliss.

This story, evidently of clerical origin, proves the position of Church and clergy toward the life of chivalry and the ideals of the Minnesingers. They condemned the service of the world of love and power which, they averred, led only to eternal damnation. Earthly ideals, with their inner sins, were symbolized by the poetic picture of *Lady World,* which was even plastically represented on the Cathedral portals at Worms and Basle.

As here the typical knight is turned from the joys and aspirations of the world, thus the women of that brilliant period were drawn from their delight in earthly life and love; Christ was shown to them as the bridegroom of

their souls; ideal joys of the world beyond were depicted to them in attractive colors. Numberless German hymns are devoted to Mary, but so little was it possible to get away from the realism of the love of the time that the sublime glow of holy fire makes room for the almost frivolous ardor of the time of chivalry. The Holy Virgin becomes more and more an earthly queen, whose court is provided with all the luxuries of the time. Religious sentimentality changes into passion. The piety of the noble ladies by no means deprives the minstrel knights of their due, or, as Scherer ingeniously says, "the result of the hundred years' struggle of the clergy against the *world* ends in the triumph of the latter." But not entirely so, for again and again there stirs in the German conscience the eternally spiritual element.

The Church placed in the field new troops, who did their work with victorious energy. Orders of beggar monks arose, and the Popes soon realized what a valuable instrument they were. The Dominicans and Franciscans had begun to settle in Germany. As preachers and confessors, they strove for dominance over souls. They inveighed passionately against the courtly life. Sinful was the tournament, sinful the luxuries of the table and courtly dress and fashions, sinful the dance and the *minne*, the worldly song and the service to women out of wedlock. Their influence upon women became very marked; many ladies began to turn from the world, sat like nuns, hid their bosoms and faces, and wore scapulars. "Instead of going with us to dance, you stand day and night in church," is a knightly complaint.

Not only piety and mysticism, but scholarship, which also was in conflict with chivalry, destroyed the minnesong. The great Italian Dominican, Thomas Aquinas, furnished to German mystics a considerable part of their

philosophy. The essence of mysticism, poetically conceived, is the conviction that the soul is a bride of Christ. Mystic theology described the passionate emotions of the soul, in her ascent to, and union with her heavenly bridegroom. Eckard, Tauler, and Suso are the great leaders of the mystic movement which, seizing especially the minds and souls of women, transfers the nature of earthly *minne* to heavenly *minne*.

In this connection, we must mention a princely woman whose self-abnegating virtue rises well-nigh to the superhuman: Elizabeth of Thuringia. She was a daughter of King Andrew of Hungary, and in 1218 was married to Ludwig of Thuringia, after whose death she was treated most brutally by her brothers-in-law. Her confessor, the monk Konrad of Marburg, a dark fanatic, who tried to introduce the Inquisition—the horrible Spanish institution—into Germany, and who was killed in 1233 by a band of robber knights, tortured the pious princess with his gloomy ascetics. This princess devoted her life to charity and noble deeds for the poor and sick, whom she nursed and tended with her own hands. She died at the age of twenty-six, after having rejected the suit of the great and romantic Hohenstaufen emperor Frederick II.; she is said to have earned her living during her last years by spinning wool. The saga has illumined the fame of that saintly royal woman with the aureole of glory and affection.

Pious women nursed the entire mystic movement. Mathilda of Magdeburg (1277) describes in her fragmentary and profoundly passionate revelations the mingling of the soul with God. Many ecstatic women followed her. Visions became a fashion in the fourteenth century. The ecstatic state of passionate love for the divine which shook her frame was considered the union with God, and the blissful rapture of one nun wrought a holy contagion

among all her sisters. All the cloisters were drawn into the nervous whirlpool of religio-sensuous emotions. Ladies who formerly found satisfaction in the charms of the minnesong retired to the cloisters and passed through all the stages of the emotions of love toward the divinity, the Creator of all life.

Such was the period of the Minnesingers, and such the reaction against them. The cultural forces of the epoch can be expressed only by describing the literary trend of the events of life. They are correlative and interdependent. If, therefore, this chapter should appear to the reader to be unduly literary rather than historical, we can defend it by stating the fact that this was an era of song, and that this literature bears everywhere the stamp of truth. It is the faithful reflection of an infinitely rich time from which only the brilliant melodies of saga and song ring down to our prosaic and materialistic century.

Chapter VI

The Coming of the Mastersingers

VI

THE COMING OF THE MASTERSINGERS

AFTER the lofty house of Hohenstaufen had been overwhelmed with destruction, the interregnum, the time of anarchy, "the emperorless, the terrible time," in Schiller's words, (1250–1273), and the reign of Rudolf of the house of Habsburg mark the beginning of the era of the decline in German culture. Princes and nobles had long ago ceased to sing, for between arms the Muses are silent. Tenderness and refinement of feeling gradually drifted into the commonplace if not into downright coarseness. We are obliged to record a cheerless period of mediocrity and degradation lasting almost four centuries, though, of course, interwoven here and there with illuminating stars that shoot up to the heavens from this dreary waste, and continuing until about the middle of the eighteenth century, when the second classical bloom came into florescence and intensified strongly the classical era of the Middle Ages.

The decline that found its perigee in the period of the Mastersingers went on gradually. It was the result of various political and social causes. The æsthetic ideals, because of which in the time of the Hohenstaufens women were revered, vanished. With the decadence of culture superstition asserted itself more strongly. Women were burned as witches; and the general references to them in the literature of the period of decline are usually vulgar,

and not infrequently obscene. Refined deportment toward women ceased. Saint Ruffian (Sanct Grobianus) became the idol of the era of decadence, and the vulgarities of Till Eulenspiegel furnished amusement. "Shamelessness celebrated a boisterous carnival." The classics alone, though diluted by pitiful scholasticism until rescued and raised to a higher plane by the Humanists of the Renaissance, became the only oasis in the dreary waste of the decadence.

In most of the cities that were centres of intellectual life, the plebeians arose and replaced the formerly highly cultured patricians. The burghers began to tune the melodies of a new music: a banausic artisan song. The comic anecdote and the dramatic farce pleased the people best and, therefore, prevailed. There was a general delight in comical, farcical rôles, and such elements were even introduced into religious plays. For example, Saint Mary complains that she has no diapers to protect the Holy Child from frost. Saint Joseph gets into a quarrel with two maids; there is a free fight; vulgar reproaches and blows are exchanged. Darkness begins to spread over Germany. The devil, stupid or otherwise, introduces his spook; sorceresses and hags professing magic skill are everywhere. The defamation of the grand institutions of the Papacy, owing to several unworthy successors of Saint Peter, promotes contempt and ludicrous treatment. The ridiculous fiction of the alleged "Papess" Joanna becomes a farcical subject, but is, nevertheless, jokingly rescued from the claws of the devil. Her story goes thus: a maiden elopes with a priest, her lover, to Rome, dons man's dress, becomes a doctor, a cardinal, and at last a Pope. She is finally ignominiously unmasked, received by the devils in hell, but saved by the intercession of Saint Mary and Saint Nicholas. Dietrich Schernberg

treated this strange subject at Mühlhausen, in Thuringia, in his play of *Frau Jutta*. All these morality plays, mysteries, farces, *sottises,*—sacred or profane,—are scarcely ever edifying, and this whether they treat of court sessions regarding love troubles, marriage calamities, allegorical figures, fools of love, women, wicked monks, or quacks. Here, a maiden leads her lovers by the nose; there, lovers present themselves before Lady Venus. An immoderate coarseness and indecency in manner and action is part of the game; even in the presence of women the utmost vulgarity was permitted. Women joined in the most obscene conversation, and it is astonishing to what depths of immodesty their speech descended. Nürnberg was the centre of carnival plays. Hans Rosenblüt and Hans Folz, authors of incredibly obscene, though very clever, farces, were the forerunners of the great and lovable Hans Sachs,

> "Who was a shoe-
> maker and a poet, too."

But it is incumbent upon us to return to the beginning of the period of decadence and consider the decline in its sequence. During the era of chivalry the follies of the nobles were imitated by the peasants and burghers. Intermarriages between poor nobles and rich peasants occurred now and then, liaisons and amours between them were much more frequent; the caricature of the *bourgeois gentilhomme,* whom Molière satirized in his immortal comedy, was ever present. Neidhart's and Stricker's poems and Werner's *Meier Helmbrecht* furnish delightful figures and caricatures of the upstart class which was so scorned, ridiculed, and snubbed by the "smart set" of the time.

Yet, on the whole, it may be said that the boys and girls of the peasants and bourgeois led natural lives, courting

and dancing and wooing, as long as they were kept from the influence of the chivalric craze. Instead of knight-errantry there were among these young people simple though not always platonic relations. The lords still exercised their harmful influence upon the freedom of the peasantry, but it gradually diminished. At springtide there was love and marriage, not always voluntarily, but in deference to the right of lords and princes to command their dependants to marry. In some localities a system of pairing prevailed, and maids were assigned as companions by lot, and mated couples danced together during an entire summer. Such play, very naturally, and not infrequently, became earnest.

The nobles were mostly landed proprietors, but when the cities began to grow, urban patricians, proud and self-satisfied, arose. The common people, however, because of their number and increasing wealth, gained a share in the government. They formed themselves, for strength and self-defence, into "corporations and guilds." They won city rights. In the course of time, instead of the rule of the "families," or patricians, there came the rule of the guilds. The democracy gained control, though not until after hard and frequently very bloody fights of the factions at the polls for municipal supremacy. With the victory of democracy begins the industrial, commercial, and political vigor of the common people. This is manifested in the great and important city leagues: especially the Hansa, but also the League of Rhenish and of Suabian Cities—unions that were at times more powerful than kings and emperors.

Socially, nevertheless, the picture is reversed: the castes remain separated even in the church, as they were separated in dancing halls and other places of pleasure and drinking. Yet the free artisans, their wives and daughters,

led a joyful life at their weddings, dances, and carnivals, though they dwelt in narrow lanes and alleys, in houses of wood, straw-covered and with a few windows, and these frequently with panes of paper or none at all. Goethe in *Faust* describes these abodes:

> "Out of the hollow, gloomy gate,
> The motley throngs came forth elate:
> Each will the joy of the sunshine hoard,
> To honor the day of the Risen Lord!
> They feel themselves their resurrection:
> From the low, dark rooms, scarce habitable;
> From the bonds of Work, from Trade's restriction;
> From the pressing weight of roof and gable;
> From the narrow crushing streets and alleys;
> From the churches' solemn and reverend night,
> All come forth to the cheerful light."

On the other hand, especially later during the Renaissance period when the wealth of the burghers excited the jealousy of the mighty country nobility, the houses of the wealthy burghers were often genuine palaces, with rich antique and Italian or French furnishings. Nürnberg, Augsburg, Strassburg, etc., were real treasure cities with their mediæval architecture; so were Ulm, Frankfort, Mainz, Cologne, with their mansions filled with fine tapestry, rich furniture, colored carpets, precious art objects, painted windows, silver and gold trappings.

When the interregnum was over, with its political anarchy, with its plague (black death) that swept away hundreds of thousands, with its flagellants and other crazy penitents, the natural concomitants of the plague; when the gloomy religious fanaticism which vented its horrible "hatred of races and classes and masses" on heretics, Jews, and infidels in terrible Jew slaughters and witch burnings began to melt away under the radiant sun of the incipient Renaissance,—there arose in western and

southern Germany a wondrously rich and luxurious life among the city aristocracy. A caricature of chivalrous customs sprang up. It is characteristic that "a light miss" was the prize of a tournament in Magdeburg in 1229.

In the cities, life was more refined than on the estates of the nobles in the country. There were sleigh riding, dances, carnivals, and serenades before the windows of the fair ones. Even the churches, as stated before, offered for entertainment "mysteries and passion plays that verged on blasphemy." We hear of practical jokes which the ladies played with illustrious guests, like Emperor Sigismund and, later, Maximilian I., which genial lord the ladies took from his bed half naked, threw a wrapper over him, and danced with him through the streets of the city, which pleased the *débonnaire* emperor immensely.

Many German patrician women were already given over to the pleasures of society and became ladies of fashion rather than mothers, housekeepers, and helpers to their husbands. The *nouveau-riche* artisans soon began to imitate the luxuries of the patricians: we hear of gold bracelets, silk garments, gold girdles studded with diamonds; of shoes with silver buckles, garters embroidered with gold brocade. A chronicler relates the immense amount of wealth squandered at the wedding of a rich baker, Veit Gundlinger, in 1493. There were then consumed twenty oxen, thirty stags, forty-six calves, ninety-five swine, twenty-five peacocks (turkeys?), etc., etc.

Patricians were, however, more elegant: bridegroom and bride adorned with rings and bracelets of gold, walked to the Cathedral—surrounded by bridesmaids, while fid dles, lutes, pipes, trumpets made music. At the dancing hall, however spacious, not more than five couples could dance at the same time on account of the ladies' long trains which,—according to a preacher of the time,—

"served the devil as a dancing place." With torches the newly wed couple were at last led home to the bridal chamber, where the maidens undressed the bride, the cavaliers took off her shoes, and "when one cover covered the couple"—as the technical term ran—the companions discreetly retired.

But the unfree peasants, alas! continued to live in debasement; as also their wives and daughters. There is even documentary evidence from A. D. 1333 that women could be sold into slavery—and at a very low price, moreover, "with all their descendants." The free and rich peasants, on the other hand, sometimes lived in an unbecoming state of luxury. We glean the most interesting types of peasant life from the poets who arose among the Bavarian-Austrian race. Neidhart von Reuenthal, who lived till about 1240 at the Bavarian and Austrian courts, though a noble himself, is a rugged, old German type who neutralizes the sentimental minnesong. He contrasts strikingly the bizarre life of the lower people with the unnaturalness of the "chivalric *courtoisie*." All is depicted in strong relief, though it appears to our taste extremely coarse. Yet if any poet ever understood the life and actions of the lower classes, it was Von Reuenthal. He describes South German peasant life as it is, their dances and carousals; he compares satirically the breaking of lances at tournaments, as practised by knights, with the peasants' festivals that are turned into bouts of gluttony and free fights. His types of rustic women, however, are "courteously" dressed, with wreaths in their prettily arranged hair, fashionable hand mirrors in their girdles; they appear at the village linden tree on a Sunday, courting and flirting with the rustics (*Törper*) who carry swords and spurs in truly knightly fashion. Nevertheless, the peasant girls prefer their liaisons with the genuine article,

and the poet reveals no idyls, no abstinence, no innocent play, but downright immorality. As they could not have the knights for husbands, they chose them for lovers.

Frivolity is general also among the lower strata of society. Drastic pictures are drawn and overdrawn. There are dialogues in spring songs. Sometimes two maidens converse and open their hearts. Then mother and daughter commune; the mother desires to participate in the dance, the daughter tries in vain to dissuade her; or the daughter wishes to go and the mother dissuades; the daughter desires to join Neidhart, but the mother has a peasant ready for her to whom she is, however, indifferent; the mother keeps her clothing from her; the daughter takes it by force; the mother whips her daughter with a rake or a spindle; the other resists, and there are blows on both sides. In all these songs the girl is longing and passionate; the knight is a successful lover.

In the winter songs the case is reversed. Here the knight is sighing, complaining, rejected. The peasant girl for whom he pines makes him languish. The peasants prove superior to the knight, who avenges himself by mocking, satirizing, caricaturing the brutalities of the peasant dances, their fights, their gluttony, tawdry luxury of dress, and drunkenness.

However painful it may be to the historian of culture to record the mournful facts of degeneracy and demoralization of entire periods in the life of great and noble nations, yet he owes it to historical truth to conceal nothing. It is unfortunately true that entire classes of the German people, entire periods, entire regions, were sunk in the mire of immorality due to outer and inner conditions over which neither the nation nor its leaders had any control. Yet, such periods of moral depression are perhaps as necessary for a vigorous convalescence as the

glorious periods of the moral purity, honor, and chastity of women.

As there can be no life without death, no joy without pain, no good without evil, as no religion was ever conceived in which the principle of God, of immortality, and of infinite goodness remained unassailed by the evil forces, be it devil, demon, Loki, or Ormuz, so the history of the German nation is filled with evil forces, against which generation after generation, so far as our records go, struggled, yet finally conquered—*per aspera ad astra!*

Every German historian of culture, especially Scherr, who sought the truth and stated it fearlessly, has been attacked, reviled by captious critics, but strong is the truth and it will prevail!—*veritas prævalebit!*

In this period of German decadence the moral sense seems indeed frequently to have entirely vanished. In a mutual confession by a peasant and his wife of their moral shortcomings, which are treated jestingly, the demoralization appears plainly, without any apparent conception of its impropriety. At a peasant wedding, we hear of brutish drinking and gluttony, coarse speeches and actions, consummation of marriage before church consecration, brutal and deadly fights.

The character of the peasantry of the time appears most distinctly from Werner's *Meier Helmbrecht,* a Bavarian village story, which depicts the ambitions, sorrows, and joys, and the dissatisfaction of that class. Young Helmbrecht, an ambitious peasant boy, who had been spoiled by mother and sister, proud as a peacock in knightly raiment, desires to play a rôle at the court. In spite of his father's warnings, he joins a robber knight. After one year of debauch and degradation, he returns home as a braggart, and the old and the new generation of peasants are contrasted. The father, who in his youth had known court life, when

he went to the castle to sell his products, tells of knightly noble games, chaste dances with beautiful song and music, and the reading of the ancient heroic lays. The son reports heavy drinking, impure speeches, lies, quarrels, frauds. He replies to the exhortations of his father with vile threats. He induces his sister to follow him secretly, to be married to his comrade Lamsling; but the crisis comes at the wedding. The judge and sheriffs come and capture the robbers. Helmbrecht is blinded, driven away from home, and hanged by the peasants.

In the cities the state of affairs is even worse. Pandering is a common and thriving business, though the laws against it are of barbaric severity. In Brunswick, those convicted of the heinous crime of fostering prostitution were buried alive. But when did laws and police measures ever do away with crime when moral putrefaction once impregnated a social structure? The clerics and monks play a prominent rôle in the literature of the sexual excesses of that time, although, or perhaps because, celibacy as such has now become an enforced institution. It is true, however, that the literature of a decaying time, catering to corrupt tastes, furnishes to us sensational and extraordinary cases of impurity, while it fails to record the numerous instances of virtue, self-abnegation, and nobility.

An authority of first rank, Æneas Silvio Piccolomoni, later Pope Pius II., transmits to us a glaring picture, with little light and much lurid shadow, of Vienna as he saw it. We find there society of all ranks sadly demoralized. The burghers invite to their houses vile carousers and "light misses;" the common people are represented as steeped in immorality and drink. Wives are rarely satisfied with one husband, and the husbands knowing their shame are not specially pained by it. Gallant nobles call on married burgher women, their husbands offer wine and then leave

them to themselves. Widows do not wait, even for decency's sake, the expiration of the year of mourning before they remarry; rich old men marry young girls, who then carry on adultery with their husband's valets as they did before marriage. It happens not infrequently that fathers or husbands who dare to disturb their daughters or wives in their iniquities with the nobles are killed or poisoned. Such is Æneas Silvio's account of Viennese society.

Similar stupefying pictures of social life in many other cities may be gleaned from chronicles, history, and sermons. Debauch is constant and appalling. In the thriving Hanseatic city of Lübeck we hear of illustrious ladies masked by thick veils holding bestial orgies with common sailors in the vilest drinking resorts. Again we read of the great severity of the penal laws, and again we note their practical inefficiency. The punishment for the crime of rape was death, usually by decapitation, but in Suabia and Hessen the criminal was buried alive or transfixed. The injured woman, however, to give legal force to her accusation was required to announce her disgrace immediately by loud screams and by the exhibition of dishevelled hair and torn garments. The statutes vary, but all are harsh. Adulterers belonging to the lower classes,—in the upper classes adultery was too common to be punished,—when seized *in flagranti delicto,* were liable to be decapitated or to be buried alive together. Incest was punishable by confiscation of property; bigamy, by death. The penalty for infanticide also was death, either by decapitation or by drowning; sometimes a snake, a cat, or a dog was put into the sack with the victim to render her punishment more terrible. Shrews and evil-tongued women were sometimes punished by being placed backward on asses and driven through the streets in disgrace.

Even the pleasures considered legitimate during the late Middle Ages and the beginning of the modern era, were decidedly equivocal or immoral. Public bathing which was so general that even in the country every well-arranged house had its own bathroom, might be considered rather a redeeming feature of the unclean life recorded. But excesses soon make it doubtful whether public baths should not be regarded as baudy houses of the worst kind. The city of Basle in the thirteenth century had not fewer than fifteen bathhouses. As in ancient Rome, the bath-houses were public places of amusement somewhat like the clubs of to-day. There men were shaved and had their toilette perfected and the ladies had their hair dressed. Massage was in fashion. Amusements of all kinds, gambling, drinking, flirting, and love intrigues made public bathing a rather costly pastime. At most places there was common bathing of men and women. The most famous water resorts were the Wildbad in the Black Forest, Baden in the Breisgau, and Baden in Aargau. There is gathered all the wealth of the surrounding country. Princes and knights, highborn ladies, rich merchants, prelates, and abbesses bathed, jested, and led a gay life.

We have an intensely interesting account from the pen of the scholarly Francis Poggio of Florence (1380–1459) of the bathing customs of Baden. He had accompanied Pope John XXIII. to the Council of Constance, and had then gone to Baden to cure the "chiragra" from which he suffered. From a Latin letter written to his friend Niccolo Niccoli, in the summer of 1417, and translated by Gustav Freytag, in his famous *Pictures from German Life,* we glean the following facts:

"Baden itself affords for the mind little or no diversion; but has in all other respects such extraordinary charm that Venus seems to have come from Cyprus, for whatever

the world contains of beauty has assembled here, and so much do they uphold the customs of this goddess, so fully do you find again her manners and dissoluteness, that, though they may not have read the speech of Heliogabalus, they appear to be perfectly instructed by Nature herself. . . .

"Two special baths, open on all sides, are prepared for the lowest classes of the people; and the common crowd, men, women, boys, and unmarried maidens, and the dregs of all that collect together here, make use of them. In these baths there is a partition wall, dividing the two sexes, but this is only put up for the sake of peace; and it is amusing to see how, at the same time, decrepit old beldames and young maidens descend into it naked, before all eyes, and expose their charms to the gaze of the men. More than once I have laughed at this splendid spectacle; it has brought to my mind the games of Flora at Rome, and I have much admired their simplicity who do not in the least see or think anything wrong in it. . . .

"The special baths at the inns are beautifully adorned, and common to both sexes. It is true they are divided by a wainscot, but divers open windows have been introduced, through which they can drink with, speak to, see, and touch each other, as frequently happens. Besides this, there are galleries above, where the men meet and chatter together, for every one is free to enter the bath of another, and to tarry there, in order to look about, and joke and enliven his spirits, by seeing beautiful women nude when they go in and come out. In many baths both sexes have access to the bath by the same entrance, and it not unfrequently comes to pass that a man meets a naked woman, and the reverse. Nevertheless, the men bind a cloth around their loins, and the women have a linen dress on, but this is open either in the middle or on

the side, so that neither neck, nor breast, nor shoulders are covered. . . .

"It is wonderful to see in what innocence they live, and with what frank confidence they regard the men; the liberties which foreigners presume to take with their ladies do not attract their attention; they interpret everything well. In Plato's Republic, according to whose rules everything was to be in common, they would have behaved themselves excellently, as they already, without knowing his teaching, are so inclined to belong to his sect. . . .

"There can be nothing more charming than to see budding maidens, or those in full bloom, with pretty, kindly faces, in figure and deportment like goddesses, strike the lute; then they throw their flowing dress a little back in the water, and each appears like a Venus. It is the custom of the women to beg for alms jestingly from the men who view them from above; one throws to them, especially to the pretty ones, small coins, which they catch with their hands or with the outspread dresses, whilst one pushes away the other, and in this game their charms were frequently unveiled. . . .

"But the most striking thing is the countless multitude of nobles and plebeians, who gather here from the most distant parts, not so much for health as for pleasure. All lovers and spendthrifts, all pleasure seekers, stream together here, for the satisfaction of their desires. Many women feign bodily ailments, whilst it is really their hearts that are affected; therefore, one sees numberless pretty women, without husbands or relations, with two maidservants and a man, or with some old beldame of the family who is more easily deceived than bribed. . . . There are here also virgins of Vesta, or rather of Flora; besides, abbots, monks, lay-brothers, and ecclesiastics, and these live more dissolutely than the others; some of them also

live with the women, adorn their hair with wreaths, and forget all religion. . . . And it is remarkable that among the great number, almost thousands of men of different manners and such a drunken set, no discord arises, no tumults, no partisanship, no conspiracies, and no swearing. The men allow their wives to be toyed with, and see them pairing off with entire strangers, but it does not discompose or surprise them; they think it is all in an honest and housewifely way." Poggio, with truly Rabelaisian irony, adds: "No baths in the world are more apt for the fecundity of women."

But whether the Italian classicist is willing to excuse the luxury and debauch, refined or otherwise, which he found at Baden, or which he might have found anywhere in the social circles of the rich German cities, the truth is that the intercourse between the sexes had become loose, and that the prelates and their ladies, the cavaliers and their mistresses, the rich burghers and the "light misses," the monks and roving women were swarming everywhere; and that those abuses became one of the foremost grievances which helped to swell the ranks of those German patriots so that a reform in head and limbs of the social structure became a necessity.

Indeed, "the good old time of pious memory" had reduced prostitution to the standard of a science; there is an ostentatious freedom in the treatment of the question which is quite offensive to modern ears. The fantastic romanticism described in the preceding chapter had really contributed very little to genuine morality: the theory of the veneration of women and the practice of unrestrained lust were absolutely opposed. The history of prostitution during this period is divided into two chapters: one treats of the women who remain stationary in their cities; the other of the migratory women who travel to fairs, church

councils, tournaments, imperial diets, coronations. Scherr gives some statistics of the high prices paid for lust; he mentions the gain by one woman of eight hundred gilders on such an excursion, a sum which at that time represented a fortune. The armies, too, were accompanied by hosts of women who, with the other baggage, were under the control of the general provost (*Hurenweibel*). This stage of corruption, however, belongs more immediately to the abominations of the Thirty Years' War.

The settled prostitutes lived in public houses (*Frauenhäuser*) of which, in large cities, there were several, usually under communal administration. We read that entertainment in these houses was then part of the hospitality offered to honored guests, just as at present the privileges of our clubs are extended as a courtesy. The houses were built and maintained avowedly for "a better protection of womanly and virgin honor" of the burgher wives and daughters. Emperor Sigismund and his suite were entertained without expense in the bawdy houses of Bern and Ulm, in 1413 and 1434 respectively, as is proved by historical evidence. Such houses, under the directorship of a landlord, called "ruffian," were the property of the communities, nay, they sometimes belonged to the "regalia" of secular or spiritual princes. The inmates must be strangers and unmarried. Married men, clerics, and Jews were to be excluded, but this was only a paper law. According to the spirit of accurate definition prevalent at the time, everything was strictly regulated: payment, food for the inmates, etc. The houses were closed on Sundays and holidays and on the eves before these festivals. The inmates were treated harshly in some cities, were under the surveillance of the hangman, and when dead they were buried in the potter's field; in other cities they were privileged; in Leipzig they had even the freedom of the

city to pass yearly in solemn procession at the beginning of the fasting period. A certain professional or guild pride existed among them; they rigidly persecuted the unlicensed, unprivileged prostitutes. Some cities gave them citizenship for "their sacrifice for the common good"; in some places donations were given to those who married, a generous way indeed to rescue many unfortunates from shame. To make them noticeable, their garments, usually green in color, were prescribed for them. Augsburg ordered the hood of their veil to be green and two inches wide; Leipzig prescribed a short yellow mantle; Bern and Zürich a red cap. Sometimes luxurious fashions adopted by distinguished ladies were permitted to prostitutes in order to bring luxury into disrepute.

At the end of the fifteenth century, prostitution had assumed enormous proportions and carried in its train the terrible, loathsome, venereal disease. The Renaissance and the Reformation, it is true, had at first beneficent effects; disreputable houses were closed; a higher spirit swept over the land, but everything soon returned to its former condition, as we read in Erasmus's dialogues or Luther's writings. The brave and patriotic knight and humanist Ulrich von Hutton himself died, young and abandoned, of the loathsome disease; it is unknown whether he contracted it through his own fault, or by contagion.

Catholicism performed a noble work by opening many cloisters and asylums to penitent fallen women, and thus saved many victims. The church certainly strove, on the whole, to improve the moral conditions of the country. The monasteries were in most cases resorts for the daughters of the poorer nobility, and for the pious maidens, whether highborn or lowly, when marriage was impossible or other motives urged them to retire from the world. This

statement must be made and emphasized for the honor of the millions of pure and noble women, who lived and worked and suffered and sacrificed themselves for humanity in the Church and in the cloisters which were the female academies of the time. Women lived there a happy and quiet life with intellectual and spiritual occupations. Reading, writing, religion, sewing, weaving, and embroidery were taught.

But it is only natural that among the thousands of women in religious life many failed in their mission, having mistaken their vocation. They became unhappy in their solitude without love, especially such as had been forced into the nunnery against their will and inclination. In such cases their conduct sometimes stands in glaring contrast with their vows of chastity.

The centuries leading up to the Reformation are full of complaints of priestly debauchery, which naturally reflected also upon the nuns. The cloister of Gnadenzell is reported to have been a pleasure resort for the neighboring nobility, who there celebrated nightly orgies and infamous dances; Count Hans von Lupfen, A. D. 1428, chided the prioress, in a document of historical interest, for having failed to remove in time the nuns who had become pregnant, and for having thus given cause to the neighbors to complain that "the cloister walls were resounding with the cries of babies." Bishop Gaimbus, of Castell, reports to the Pope (June 20, 1484) of the nunnery of Löflingen, near Ulm, that, at an investigation for reforms, the majority of the nuns were found "in an advanced state of motherhood" (*in gesegneten Leibesumständen*).

Sebastian Brant's *Ship of Fools* (1494) gives a terrible picture of the sins and follies of the era; never has there been such a heavy freight of perverse and wicked fools from all ranks and walks of life.

Thomas Murner's *Conjuration of Fools* (*Narrenbeschwörung*), fourteen years later, shows the mediæval ideals in the caricature to which they had degenerated. The old conditions that had produced lofty and genuine ideals had died away, nothing remained but the shell, the mere form and outline. The satire against the dissolute world, the chastisement of it by stinging words and sarcastic writings, proves simply the righteous anger which the good and patriotic men of the time felt regarding the national degradation; a total reform became a dire necessity. This was a Titanic task indeed, for during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries intellectual barrenness, spiritual corruption, and luxuriant debauchery prevailed. The worst feature was the chain of vice which, through apish imitation, was transmitted from the debased women of the upper classes to the women of the *bourgeoisie,* and from the latter to the peasants.

The new fashions were not only hideous, but became even obscene: "What nature wants to be concealed, that do they expose and prostitute. Shame upon the German nation!" are Brant's harsh words. The famous preacher Geiler von Kaisersberg thunders from the pulpit words hardly expressible in modern language: "Women's dresses are so short that they conceal nothing in front or behind, the upper garments are so cut down that the bosom is visible. Then again the trains are as long as tails. Women imitate man's foolish garb: the ridiculous high pointed shoes and tinkling bells on their garments." The pictures of the time and the attempts of cities and princes to regulate these monstrosities prove to us that the portraits of the satirists and the preachers are not overdrawn.

In order to illuminate a cultural epoch in the history of any nation it is, however, always safest to recur to the

sources themselves, for they spring, knowingly or unknowingly, from the social soil upon which they thrive.

One of the most characteristic, though not edifying, "human documents" is the collection of contemporary poetry by a female author, Klara Hätzlerin, who was, according to her editor, Karl Haltaus, undoubtedly a nun from Augsburg, and who filled her leisure hours—as was customary in the nunneries of her time—in copying songs and poems. Evidently, though a cultured woman, she was not a pietist. This is apparent from the erotic and obscene matter found in her work, which even recalls Roswitha of Gandersheim's plays written more than five hundred years earlier. The work is undoubtedly genuine. It is signed: "A. D. 1471. Augspurg. Clara Hatzlerin." The manuscript contains two hundred and nineteen poems, besides ditties and sententious sayings. It marks the transition from the Middle Ages to modern times, and is therefore of very great cultural value. The poems do not yet bear the scholastic, not to say pedantic, character of the best mastersingers; their type is, on the contrary, strictly popular, and frequently vulgar. The subjects of Klara Hätzlerin's collection of lyric poetry coincide with those of the *minne:* there are night songs and watch songs, songs of the love of the fair one, songs describing her virtues and her beauty, songs telling of fears of the light and the spies, rhythmical entreaties for slight favors of love, a glance, an embrace to appease the lover's sorrow or to give him strength to be constant.

Very characteristic of the time, especially as selections by a nun, betraying her interests and occupations, are the rustic caricatures and exaggerations of the coarseness of the peasant classes.

It must not be forgotten that—*as to material wealth*—the burghers and the peasant classes were never better off in

Germany than during the two centuries preceding the Thirty Years' War, while the nobility had sunk into poverty, ruffianism, brigandage. What shall be said of a time when a prince of the highest rank, Duke Ernst of Bavaria, A. D. 1436, brutally murdered fair Agnes Bernauerin, the lawful wife of his son. To this very day the martyred woman is sung in German romance and poetry. She was the daughter of a barber and surgeon of Augsburg, where prince Albert, son of Duke Ernst, learned to know and to love her because of her almost unearthly beauty and charm. He made her in due form his lawful wife; but the old duke would not recognize the marriage. In the absence of her husband, Agnes was seized in the castle of Straubing, dragged upon the bridge of the Danube, and hurled into the stream. She drifted toward the bank, where one of the hangmen seized her with his hooked pole by her gold-colored hair, plunged her into deep water, and held her beneath its surface until she was drowned.

But let us return to Klara Hätzlerin, the nun, who so frequently chooses scenes from the most licentious poets. The *Song of the Seven Greatest Pleasures* is original, but extremely coarse. Eating, drinking, *minne* play of the most bestial kind, the natural functions of stomach and kidneys, sleeping, bathing (as described by Poggio), are the ideals of fifteenth century materialism.

The most loathsome poem, however, in the collection so foul with obscene pictures, is the one in which a mother teaches her daughter in undisguised terms the arduous, though lucrative, art of prostitution. It is scarcely possible that any other literature should contain a poem so degraded.

Again, a poem by Hans Rosenplüt is given entirely in the manner of Boccaccio. The servant of a rich man seeks the favor of his mistress and finds acceptance. She takes

him to her chamber and hides him under the bed. When the husband retires to his couch, she tells him that the servant sought her love and that she had invited him for the night to the garden to have him chastised. She advises her husband to put on her clothing, to go into the garden, and to chastise the scoundrel with a heavy club. The husband does as he is bidden. Meanwhile, the wife bestows her favors upon the manservant. Thereupon she gives him a stick with which he belabors his master unmercifully, saying he only wished to test the fidelity of his mistress toward his beloved master. The latter barely escapes from the heavy volley of blows, tells his wife the adventure, and finally thanks God for such a faithful servant. The poet, Hans Rosenplüt, composed many carnival plays which are filled with obscene jests, and deal mostly with the lowest peasant elements.

In the same collection, Klara Hätzlerin presents rather barren encomiums on Saint Mary, all of which were composed by Muscatblüt. Feebly, the Maria-cult arose once more with a narrow and superstitious treatment, painfully different from the beautiful conceptions of the older periods. Here everything is Philistine. The statutes of the Rosenkrantz order and the brotherhood of Saint Ursula decree eleven thousand prayers in honor of the eleven thousand virgins who are still adored as saints, with their seat at Cologne. Spiritual songs exalt Saint Mary as equal in strength to Christ, nay, in the estimation of the lowly masses, superior to Him. There is a bombastic praise of all her material and spiritual perfections. The songs are scholastic in their exaggeration, artificial in form, and barbarous in language; in pompous terms church controversies are treated there: the Trinity, original sin, the last judgment, and other orthodox and mystic broodings, similes, allegories, etc. A type of the treatment is the description

Muscatblüt gives of the Blessed Virgin when he calls her "a chest in which God himself dwells, the rod of Aaron, a well illuminated torch, a chaste Arc of Noah, a deep pond, a cask of myrrh, a reed of grace in God's field, her body a coffin or a castle—the decadence is marked everywhere. We look back with longing eyes to the pure, the beautiful, the lofty, all-merciful Mother of God of the rich, uncontaminated past, the Holy Virgin who has enriched, ennobled, purified the German nation, German literature, German music, and, above all, the German arts of painting, sculpture, and architecture."

Next to those bombastic, pseudo-pious songs we find hideous drinking songs, poems of gluttony and licentiousness, all of which are, nevertheless, highly valuable to the historian of culture. There are authentic documents revealing the tremendous downfall of national ideals from the pedestal of the glorious past, and the immense recuperative power of the nation in struggling upward again after two centuries and a half to the Second Period of Bloom, crowned by Lessing, Schiller, Goethe!

A poem in the compilation of Klara Hätzlerin, *On the Nature of the Child*, is intensely interesting, first, as regards the popular physiological knowledge of the time on the mystery of gestation; secondly, as a cultural document on the character of Klara, the nun's, occupation during her leisure hours. She appeals first to her patroness: "Virgin Mary, I call to thee at all times for thy grace. May thy help point out to me thy way that I may walk on thy path, and may also begin anon to consider how the nature of man's strength mingles in the female womb," etc., and then by an extraordinary medley of truth, error, and fiction she describes the entire process of gestation.

There are stories of shrews and of scolding, nagging women, concluding with: "Whoever has a nagging wife,

shall rid himself of her as soon as possible, buy a good rope, hang her on a bough, take three big wolves and hang them beside her. Whoever saw gallows with worse skins? There the song has an end, God evil women to Hades send!"

We cheerfully leave the foul atmosphere of a poetry which could not have sunk lower in form and spirit, and which, nevertheless, could not have existed but for its direct connection with the social sphere of which it treated and in which its roots were imbedded. And indeed we know also from incontestable historical evidence that while the privileges of the other three estates grew, a heavy slavery lay upon the fourth, the peasantry. When oppression lays its leaden hand too heavily upon a race or a class, it crushes out, gradually but surely, the divine instincts of the human soul. Münster, in his *Kosmography,* which appeared in 1545, speaks of "the low and wretched life of the peasants." Their houses are miserable hovels of dirt and wood, placed directly on the ground, and thatched with straw. Their food is black rye bread, oats or boiled lentils and peas. A coarse upper coat, two wooden shoes, and a cheap felt hat are their only clothing. These people have never peace or rest. Their masters they must serve through the whole year; there is nothing that the poor people must not do. The picture is completed by another author, who says: "The toilsome people of the peasantry are everybody's footrag, heavily laden and burdened with tasks of slavery, hard labor, interests, taxes, duties, etc." We will not unroll here the endless lists of personal and property dues which were imposed upon the unfortunate peasants of that period. The saddest aspect of that physical oppression is that the unfortunate people were not even conscious of their frightful moral subjugation. We have already mentioned that

even the marriage of the serfs of both sexes depended upon the consent of their masters, the landed proprietor or, in most cases, of his steward, that the marital tax (*maritagium*) had to be paid for this consent, and that the body of the unfortunate peasant girl belonged to her oppressor, at least for the first night (*jus primæ noctis*). The existence of this infamous right has been contested by German historians, but as proofs Scherr adduces two authentic documents of the years 1538 and 1543. All these facts are sufficient proof that the above literary remnants do not greatly exaggerate the moral and intellectual condition of that class, which is the basic element of every civilization.

We now proceed with more satisfaction to an estimate of the *bourgeoisie*. They became more and more cultured, and took upon themselves the task of raising the standards of education and morality, of upholding the sacred flame of German spiritual and intellectual life. They began to spin again the thread of poetry that had broken in the brutalized hands of a degraded nobility. This thread was now the "Mastersong." Mastersong, though of a prosaic, mechanical style, was nevertheless an ennobling, purifying element of culture in the frivolous and impure life of late mediæval German cities. Mastersong formed the bridge between the world of everyday realism and the world of ideals. Mastersong alone prevented an entire break of the continuity of German civilization between the two great periods of bloom, the thirteenth and the eighteenth centuries. As the *bourgeoisie* acquired a social position and a personal worth of their own, as the German peasantry, in the extreme North at the mouth of the Elbe between marshes and sea,—the Ditmarschen and Stedingers,—and again in the South between the Alpine passes, —the Swiss,—heroically defended their manhood and

liberties, there began among those lowly born, but high-minded, vigorous, and comparatively pure classes an intellectual and a moral life of a higher order. The folk song of love, of warlike honor, of victory over the brutal squirearchy, of invigorating patriotism, of a national union embracing all classes, begins to ring through the German "poetic forest," as Uhland calls it. The loving maid speaks of the falcon, and means the lover; the rose garden signifies love's favor; flowers are maidens, like the rose on the heath that is plucked by the boy in spite of its thorns; the forget-me-not designates modesty, humility, chastity. There are little love songs describing the sorrow of parting, the joy of the dance, the dream of love under the tree from which a rain of blossoms bedews the sleeping beauty.

Emperor Maximilian (1493–1519), "the last knight," the best-beloved son of the house of Habsburg, reigns now in Germany. It is a time of transition, of universal change. The world has doubled its size by the discovery of America, and the horizon has been enlarged accordingly. The printing press has revolutionized the arts. Yet poetry is dry, allegorical, wooden. Maximilian, aided by his secretaries, relates in a rimed allegorical romance, *Teuerdank,* his wooing of Mary of Burgundy, or, as he calls her in his poem, the beautiful and illustrious virgin Ehrenreich, only daughter of the powerful king "Glorious" (*Ruhmreich*). He recounts the mighty deeds which he must accomplish before he can possess her.

The barrenness of the time, in spite of a great and varied literary activity which, however, bears the stamp of mediocrity, appears also in the translations made by several highborn ladies: Elizabeth of Lorraine, and Eleanor of Scotland, consort of Duke Sigmund of Austria. Princess Mathilda, of the illustrious Wittelsbach-Palatine house,

the "Lady of Austria," as she is called in the folk song, fostered the first advent of humanism into Suabia and Bavaria, and entertained sympathetic relations with all those who worked in the direction of humanism and literary reform. Niclas von Wyle, an early Humanist, had already in 1474, in opposition to the popular farces which contained offensive, coarse, and frequently obscene treatment of woman, composed an encomium or eulogy in her honor, in which he enumerated the manifold blessings which woman had brought to the world. Yet the ribald farces still abound, and are even stimulated by the incipient religious reform. Joseph in Egypt is the typical subject for poems expressing the criminal and passionate love of woman; the monologue of Potiphar's wife expressing her sinful feelings for Joseph is nothing less than edifying. The play of *Fair Susanna* presented wicked passion in aged men, and innocence persecuted, but finally saved; Judith and Holofernes characterized the clash between conflicting religions.

In South Germany, Nürnberg, Luther's "eye and ear of Germany," is the centre of the culture of the transition period, and is the mirror in which the life of the time is reflected. The æsthetic culture and the lack of it, the status of woman in society, appear nowhere more plainly than in the plays of Hans Sachs, the greatest exponent of the life of his time. He is not stimulated by the passions of a Hutten, of a Luther, or of the latter's bitter foe, Thomas Murner. His soul overflows with peace and equanimity even where he censures and chides. His censure is always amiable and gentle. He even describes passions meekly. He touchingly represents the driving from Paradise of Adam and Eve, who become more closely attached to each other in misfortune; he delicately depicts Eve's naïve anxiety concerning God, whose visit

she apparently fears. He writes decorously of the priest and his fair housekeeper who has not yet attained the canonic age of safety: of the old hag who acts as a procuress and panderer, who is quarrelsome and hideous, and of whom even the devil is afraid; the faithless, cunning, amorous wife who makes sport of her deceived, foolish husband; the jealous and the credulous husband, etc.

In formulating a theory of love, Hans Sachs, who, in his own long life, had felt love's grief and unrest, decided to employ the examples which he gathered from his own experience as well as from history and poetry, especially the Italians Petrarca, Boccaccio, and others. In his carnival plays, however, he avoids, from the very first, the coarseness and obscenity of Rosenplüt and Hans Folz; but though he no doubt considered that he had excluded all indecency from his works, they still are, here and there, grievous to our modern ears.

In his carnival play *Vom Venusberg,* the goddess speaks: "I am Venus, protectress of love, many a realm was destroyed through me; I have great power on earth over rich, poor, young, and old; whom I wound with the arrow mine, he must forever my servant be. I now draw my bow; he who will flee shall flee at once." Too late: the knight is struck, so are all the others, maids and gentlewomen.

In 1518 Sachs wrote the *Complaint of the Exiled Lady Chastity,* a very bold allegory: Virgin Chastity, daughter of Lady Honor, dwelt with many virgins in the realm of Virginitas. In the neighborhood lived the frivolous Queen Venus, who frequently invaded the former's kingdom and tried to conquer it. In the repeated wars, Queen Venus succeeded in capturing almost all the virgins, and took them over to the kingdom of Lady Shame. Only Chastity herself, with her royal retinue, the allegorized twelve womanly virtues, had been saved from capture; they fled

and wandered long from one country to the other without finding a hospitable reception. At last they arrived at a distant wilderness, where Chastity was again suddenly attacked by Queen Venus and her allied princesses: Pride, Frivolity, Intemperance, Idleness, Faithlessness, etc. The poet then warns maidens of the dangers threatening them on the part of Venus and her suite. After explaining the twelve virtues which aid Chastity, he concludes: "Beware of love, be steady, spare your love until you come to marriage." Sachs himself had at an early age married, in 1519, Kunigunde Kreuzer, an orphan of good family.

The biographer of Hans Sachs described the marriage of Dr. Christoph Scheuerl, a famous jurist of Nürnberg, "the oracle of the Republic." The description of this marriage is interesting as a picture of the life of the high patrician families and their ceremonies and festivities. All the families (*Geschlechter*) of the city were present. The festivities lasted a whole week, and the ceremonies were elaborate and splendid. Marriage feasts of the city aristocracy took place either in the house of the parents of the bridal couple, or in the city hall, or even in the cloister. This last practice was, however, forbidden in Nürnberg in 1485, "because the carousals and dances had become unbefitting the holy place." The patrician bridegroom gave the bride a ring with precious stones, the latter presented the bridegroom with an embroidered silken kerchief. There was a great display of precious garments and silk damask. The servants wore the colors of the family to which they belonged. The headgear of the patrician lady was a high diadem, while the bridegroom wore a silver wreath adorned with artificial flowers. The bride's maids and the table maidens wore the same kind of wreath and their hair was arranged in loose waves. The first marriage day was followed by an "early morning dance at

the city-hall, a night-dance, and a wedding-assembly only for the ladies."

The artisan marriages are recorded to have been similar in character, only the jests of the official "speaker" (*Spruchsprecher*) were probably somewhat rude, and the display was not so elaborate as that used in patrician weddings.

Hans Sachs's married life was very happy. His manifold jests regarding quarrelsome women and their qualities, and regarding the hardships of married life were merely products of his humor. "My wife is my Paradise dear, and also my daily hellfire sheer;" and the climax:

> "She is my virtue, and my vice;
> She is my wound, and yet my balm.
> She is my heart's constant abode,
> Yet makes me gray and makes me old."

While happily married himself, he knew enough of bad wives. Albrecht Dürer's unhappy married life could furnish him sufficient material for his *Ninefold Skin of a Scold,* and *The Twelve Properties of a Bad Woman,* against which all the arts employed in the "taming of the shrew" came to naught.

In 1560 his beloved wife died, and one year later he married Barbara Harscher, a charming girl of seventeen years, whose beauty he sang in his *Artistic Woman's Praise,* and with whom he lived happily till 1576. He was buried in Saint John's Cemetery at Nürnberg. The grateful city erected in 1874 a beautiful monument in his honor. But the highest monument, "more abiding than steel," the prince of poets, Goethe, erected to him in his *Hans Sachs's Poetic Mission:*

> "An oak wreath hovers yonder in the clouds,
> With ever green fair foliage adorned;
> With this the grateful nation crowns his brow."

Hans Sachs is the typical, the universal, the noblest, and the purest Mastersinger; but he is only the first among hundreds of others who helped to preserve in Germany the sacred fire of poetry.

The *bourgeoisie* womanhood of the school of humanism, of the circle where virtue was the ideal of life, ably seconded the efforts of men like Sachs. But no one lofty specimen of superior womanhood arose from the atmosphere of feud, brigandage, and drunken intemperance among the so-called higher classes. Banqueting, hunting, fighting, gambling, carousing, and sexual excesses are recorded in plenty. The diary of the Silesian knight Hans von Schweinichen introduces us, in the middle of the sixteenth century, into a "noble" society full of poverty, brutality, and ignorance. He relates the slight acquirements of his education, interrupted by the occupation of tending the geese, his service as a page at the court of the Duke of Liegnitz, his early interest in women, his presence at weddings, "where he ate and drank his fill for day and night just as they wanted to have it." Of his friendly expedition with the Duke of Liegnitz to Mecklenburg, he says: "I have made for myself a great reputation with drinking, as I could never get enough to drink myself full." Anna of Saxony, daughter of Elector Moritz, wife of William of Orange, who died of delirium tremens, proves, by the way, that drunkenness was by no means uncommon with princely ladies. Scherr also adduces many other such princely examples. A festival at the Mecklenburg court is thus described in naïve fashion by Schweinichen in his diary: "The native squires as well as the noble young ladies lost themselves little by little, until finally there remained with me but two ladies and one knight, who began a dance. I followed with the other lady. It did not last long; my good friend slipped with his dancer to the next

chamber; I followed him. As we came to the chamber, two squires and ladies rested in a bed; the one who danced before me fell also with his lady in one bed. I asked my lady what we should do. She said in her Mecklenburg language: I should lie by her. I did not have her ask me a long time, but lay down with mantle and garments, so did the lady, and thus we chatted till the dawn of morning; *however, in all honor*. This they call there 'to lie by a maiden on truth and faith,' but I do not trust such a 'lying by,' for such truth and faith might easily become roguish." Evidently, so far as the nobility were concerned, delicacy and propriety were quite unknown in sixteenth century society.

Chapter VII

Women of the Renaissance and the Reformation

VII

WOMEN OF THE RENAISSANCE AND THE REFORMATION

WOMAN, it has been said, always needs a background. She has one in early sixteenth century Germany—a splendid background of material prosperity.

The great free cities were at the zenith of their power. Organized labor had triumphed. The guilds and the merchant corporations had done their work well. From the sturdy, self-respecting German handworker, modestly offering his own wares for sale, had been evolved the governing patrician. Prince, pope, emperor,—even foreign potentates,—bowed before the German patrician, for he held the purse strings of the world. Not a sovereign in all Europe dared enter into a campaign without permission of the Fuggers, the great merchant-bankers of Augsburg.

In their magnificent free cities the patricians of Germany lived in far more than royal splendor. The chronicler, Wimpheling, writes: "It was not an uncommon thing to eat from gold and silver plates at merchants' tables as I, myself, did in company with eleven other guests at Cologne."

Æneas Sylvius exclaims to Martin Mayer, Chancellor of Mainz: "How is it that even in your inns you always serve drinks in silver vessels? What shall I say of the knights and of the bits of their horses which are of pure

gold, of their rings, girdles, and helmets blazing in gold, of the spears and sheaths studded thickly with diamonds? What riches are displayed in your altar decorations! How beautiful are the reliquaries set in pearls and gold! How magnificent your priests' vestments! What riches in your sacristies!"

Dress received much attention. Women revelled in embroideries of gold and silver, plaited skirts with expensive galloon borders, mantles of ermine, sable and marten; crowns of gold and precious stones; pearl embroidered smocks and the daintiest, finest linen ever woven. Even the burghers' wives and daughters braided gold and silver into their back hair and curls and wore gems of rare value.

At frequent intervals, sumptuary laws designed to lessen feminine extravagance were passed, but, like all such laws since the days of Eve's figleaf, they failed. The women invariably got the better of the city fathers. In Mainz one of the most beautiful young dames of the town, acting as the representative of a large number of society women, appealed, personally, to Prince Albert, Archbishop of Brandenburg, against a decree of the Council concerning feminine attire. That handsome, Lothario-priest, Prince Albert, was not the man to resist the pleading of a pretty woman. Dismissing his fair petitioner with a kiss and the gift of a beautiful jewelled bracelet, he at once ordered the repeal of the hateful law.

But the great sociological preacher, Geiler von Kaisersberg, was no debonair voluptuary. The fairest woman's face could never persuade him to look leniently upon feminine vanity. He shouts:

"The authorities ought to forbid the abominably short skirts that are worn! Look at the belts which encircle their waists, sometimes they are of silk, sometimes of gold, sometimes so costly that the jeweller charges from forty

to fifty florins for making them. They drag long trains through the dirt without thinking of the nakedness of Christ among his poor. Some have so many dresses that, during the week, they have two dresses for each day, morning and afternoon. They have many others for dancing, and they would rather see them eaten by moths than give their cost to the poor. We see women letting their hair hang down their backs in cues like men, and wearing cock's feathers in the astoundingly ugly bonnets on their heads. What a shame and a sin! Do you not see there is no one without donkey ears on her head? It is a shame that women wear hats with ears. Some paint themselves many times a day and have false teeth and hair. O Woman! are you not fearful, with the hair of strangers on your heads? It may be the hair of some dead woman to the injury of your souls!"

The Renaissance was a period of transition—a liberation of mental force which, from Italy, spread itself, invigoràtingly, over the rest of Europe. The modern world was rolling into light. With a gun in his hands, the peasant soldier was the equal, physically at least, of his former master. The art of printing and the invention of cheap paper had given wings to thought and knowledge. Trade had penetrated strange lands. Every returning sailor and adventurer brought back tales more fascinating than fairy lore of mysterious golden islands newly discovered in the west. Wonder and imagination were awakened. Money was plentiful. In the German cities a leisure class existed. Conditions were ripe for culture, and Humanism came.

The "New Learning," as Humanism was generally called, rapidly overwhelmed the old, barren scholasticism and ecclesiasticism. Every monastery and university became a battleground where Humanism fought Scholasticism to the death.

Under the quickening influence of the "New Learning," free Latin schools for boys were established over all Germany. The poorest boy might attend any or all of the schools. Thus arose the specifically German educational system of "wandering students," with its good and evil influences.

At first little was done, educationally, for the girls. There were a very few small, poorly equipped public schools where daughters of artisans and laborers received religious teaching and slight rudimentary instruction in reading, spelling, and writing. Girls belonging to noble and patrician families were usually taught in convents. Music, dancing, embroidery, deportment, and, above all, the supervision of a large household were the studies upon which wealthy parents insisted for their daughters. But the brighter girls soon became curious about the "New Learning" of which their fathers and brothers spoke so frequently. Sastrow, in his biography, writes:

"One of my five younger sisters, Catherine, was an excellent, amiable, lovely, pious maiden. When my brother, Johannes, came home from Wittenberg, where he was a student, she bade him tell her how one could say in Latin, 'This is, truly, a beautiful maiden.' He replied, '*Profecto formosa puella*.' She asked farther how one could say, 'Rather so.' He replied, '*Sic satis*.' Some time after, three students, sons of gentlemen, came from Wittenberg to see our town. They had been recommended to the hospitality of the burgomaster, Herr Nicholas Smiterlow, who was desirous to entertain them well and have good society for them. As he had three grown-up daughters, my sister Catherine was invited among other guests. The students exchanged all kinds of jokes with the maidens, and as young fellows are wont to do also said things to one another in Latin that it would not have been seemly to

say before maidens in German. At last one said to the other, '*Profecto formosa puella,*' whereupon, my sister answered, '*Sic satis.*' Then the students were much afraid, fancying she had also understood their former amatory talk."

Enthusiasm for the "New Learning" quickly spread among German women of the higher class. Among the princesses, Matilda of the Palatinate was especially famed for her love of learning. She was a generous patron of the fine arts, and, a rarer trait among humanistic scholars, she was also an admirer of the literature of her fatherland. She made a collection of ninety-four works on the old court poetry, and delighted in the national folk songs orally preserved. Matilda encouraged the poets of her court to write poetry after the ancient methods. She ordered many valuable works translated into German. Through her influence the university of Tübingen, in Würtemberg was established.

The "New Learning" stole into the convents and made many proselytes among the nuns. Aleydis Raiskop, of Goch, to whom Butzbach dedicated a book, was renowned for her classical scholarship. She composed seven homilies on Saint Paul and translated a work on the mass from Latin into German. In the same convent with Aleydis lived an artist nun, Gertrude von Buchel, to whom Butzbach also dedicated a book, *Celebrated Painters*. Richmondis von der Horst, abbess of the convent of Seebach, corresponded in Latin with Trithemius who highly praises her various writings. Of the nun Ursula Canton, one of her admirers exclaims: "Her equal in knowledge of theological matters, of the fine arts and in eloquence and belles lettres, has not been seen for centuries."

Among German Humanists, Charitas Pirkheimer, of Nürnberg, stands preëminent. Through her brother,

Willibald Pirkheimer, the friend and generous patron of Albrecht Dürer, Erasmus, and a host of lesser Humanists, Charitas corresponded with many renowned men. Christopher Scheurl, "The Cicero of Nürnberg," said that in all his life he had known only two women,—the pious Cassandra of Venice and Charitas of Nürnberg,—who, "for their gifts of mind and fortune, their knowledge and high station, their beauty and their prudence could be compared with Cornelia, the mother of Laelius and Hortensius." In a letter to Charitas, Scheurl praises her for "preferring the book to the wool and the pen to the spindle."

These literary preferences, however, did not spoil Charitas Pirkheimer for practical life. As abbess of Saint Clare's she showed great administrative ability. Her annual reports of receipts and expenditures are models of clearness and accuracy. To manage, without serious friction, a large nunnery composed wholly of aristocrats (only the daughters of Nürnberg patricians and nobles were eligible as members) was no easy task. But Charitas seems to have made herself beloved and respected by every sister. She kept her nuns busy with such good result that Saint Clare tapestries became famous throughout Europe, and orders from private and civic patrons poured in faster than they could be filled.

No more splendid fight was ever made by any woman for conscience' sake than that of Charitas Pirkheimer to preserve the integrity of her convent after the storm of the Reformation broke over Germany. And in the fight she conquered. The Lutherans succeeded in closing the houses of every other conventual order, both male and female, in Nürnberg; but Saint Clare's, through the valor of its abbess, remained intact until the last nun died late in the century. But it was a long, a bitter, and, often, a

humiliating fight that Mother Charitas waged. Persecution was continued for years. The abbess and her nuns were denied the sacraments and confession. Three Lutheran preachers in turn, one of them a coarse, vile man, were installed at Saint Clare's. Spies were placed in the convent to see that the nuns "did not put cotton into their ears to shut out the preaching." The convent school was broken up and all revenues ceased. Poverty sorely pinched the women of the convent. Insulting rhymes and obscene pictures were flung over the walls of the garden. The maids sent out to buy bread were hooted and even roughly handled by brutal men and fanatical women. A letter which Charitas wrote to Jerome Emser, thanking him for his *Defence of the Faith,* was printed with scurrilous marginal notes. The day had not yet dawned when a woman could, "with seemliness," said Willibald Pirkheimer, "enter the field of public disputation." Pirkheimer told his sister, in somewhat brutal language, that she had "better have held her woman's tongue."

Just when the future looked most dark for Saint Clare's, Philip Melanchthon—sweetest, calmest, sanest spirit of the Reformation—came to Nürnberg. He visited his old friend, Charitas Pirkheimer, in her convent. "Would to God," Charitas writes afterward, "that every one were as discreet as Master Philip. We might then hope to be rid of many things that are vexatious." Melanchthon quietly put a stop to the persecutions of the convent. From the date of his visit Saint Clare's remained comparatively undisturbed.

It is easy to understand how the "Evangelist of Art," Albrecht Dürer, and Charitas Pirkheimer could be, as they were, the closest of friends. But Conrad Celtes, the Heine of the Renaissance, and the stately, pious abbess of Saint Clare's would seem, at first sight, to have little in common.

Nevertheless, a warm and long-continued friendship existed between these two.

The ethical note of the Renaissance was first struck in Germany. Even Conrad Celtes (the one Humanist in the Italian—the Lorenzo de' Medici—sense of the term that Germany has ever produced) could not quite deaden the Teutonic conscience. Celtes's writings are full of questionings that are almost startlingly modern. "Is there, really, a God?" "Will the soul live after death?" "What is the nature of the force that produces lightning?" Then, in the very next line perhaps, the poet lapses again into sensuality. "There is nothing sweeter under the sun than a pretty maid in a man's arms to banish care." "This," says Bezold, "was Celtes's heart-confession, and he lived up to it." Bezold adds: "In spite of his voluminous correspondence with them, Celtes did not appreciate good women. He really knew only alehouse wenches." In the light of Celtes's letters to Charitas Pirkheimer, it is hard to accept this harsh judgment unreservedly.

The Renaissance and the Reformation in Germany are so closely allied that it is difficult to separate one energy from the other. Mental and spiritual forces are not easily anchored to dates. For convenience, however, we may say that the German Renaissance lasted from 1450 to 1519 as a distinct movement, while the Reformation—largely an outgrowth of the Renaissance—fell between the years 1519 and 1560. With the beginning of the Reformation the brotherhood of humanistic scholarship was disrupted. To German women the national unrest brought heartache and soul bewilderment.

Charitas Pirkheimer was not the only woman to "forget her sex and mix in an unseemly manner in disputes about which only men are properly qualified to express an opinion." Argula von Grumbach, friend of Spalatin and wife

of an officer at the Bavarian court, also brought much sorrow upon herself by writing a spirited letter, which was printed by her friends and rejoiced in by her enemies.

Seehofer, a young Lutheran master at the university of Ingolstadt, was accused of proselyting the students. He presented to his classes seventeen propositions which he had deduced from the writings of Melanchthon. The rector of the university, by imprisonment and by threats of the Inquisition, compelled the too zealous young Lutheran to recant. At this point, Argula—an emotional, warm-hearted, and talented woman took a hand in the affair. She wrote the rector an impertinent letter, in which she spoke of Seehofer as a "mere child of eighteen," and, with refreshing confidence in her own powers of oratory, offered to come to Ingolstadt to defend, publicly, both the young master and his theses. The university authorities ignored this offer, but the Catholic cartoonists of the time made the most of it. From every quarter of Germany Argula was assailed in mocking rhymes, to which she replied in counter rhymes. The verses on both sides are rather bad, though the plucky little baroness holds her own fairly well. For her "indiscreetness" Argula was banished from court; and her husband, "for not controlling his wife properly," was dismissed from his lucrative position at the palace.

The real strength of Protestant women, however, lay not with its excitable Argulas, but with firm, steady, sensible women like Catharine von Bora, who became Luther's wife. It seems almost unjust that a girl possessed of sufficient spirit and courage to propose to the man she loved should, for posterity, be forever submerged under the appended title, "his wife." Catharine von Bora's individuality was marked. Her wise management, as wife and mother, seems phenomenal when we remember

how suddenly she was transplanted from conventual to secular life, but no healthy young tree ever better stood removal from shade to sunlight.

Catharine von Bora was descended from a noble but impoverished family. At the age of ten she was placed in the convent of Nimtsch, near Grimma. At sixteen she became a nun. In 1523, under the influence of Luther's preaching, she, with eight of her sister nuns, left the convent secretly by night and fled to Wittenberg. For her apostasy, Catharine's family cast her off. Luther found her a comfortable home and did his best to provide her with a husband. But Catharine, who, says Erasmus, was "a wonderfully pretty girl," would not accept either of the two suitors Luther recommended. Amsdorf, Luther's envoy, argued with her upon her stubbornness. Whereupon, Catharine replied, calmly, "I will not marry Glatz, but I will marry either you or Luther, if you want me." She meant that she would marry Martin Luther, for she well knew that Amsdorf's affections were already placed elsewhere. Luther, though somewhat surprised at the turn things had taken, accepted Catharine's proposal and the nuptials were duly celebrated amid the remonstrances of the Reformer's friends and the derisive howls of his enemies.

"Antichrist only can be born from this unholy union of priest and nun," was the scandalized cry of the Catholics. To which Erasmus made sarcastic reply: "Then there must have been a good many Antichrists born before now."

An indisputable testimony to Catharine's kindly nature is the affection which old John Luther and his wife felt for their son's wife. Catharine bore good, as evil fortune, with dignity. Her head was never in the least turned by the popularity of her husband. When princes visited the

humble home at Wittenberg, she received them with simple, well-bred courtesy. When beggars came she welcomed them with equal cordiality. She had much to contend against. They were poor and her husband was over generous, not only in hospitality, but in constantly giving away household effects which his family could ill afford to spare. Martin Luther, too, was a man of storms. A woman less firm and tactful than his beloved "Kathie" could hardly have lived peaceably with him.

In the evil days that fell after Luther's death, his widow did not lose her courage. She struggled nobly to support herself and children. She followed the usual heartbreaking course of poor widows in trying to make a living. She sewed; she kept boarders; she turned her hand, patiently, to any honest labor that offered itself. War, flight from pestilence, and then sudden death—so runs the record of the last bitter years of Catharine von Bora's active, helpful, noble life.

While a handful of earnest women were studying, thinking, praying, fashionable women in Germany were doing just what fashionable women always have done everywhere in all ages,—just what they were doing long ago in Athens when Aristophanes made clever sketches of them,—they were eating and drinking sumptuously; riding, visiting, backbiting, getting their daughters married, and trying to outdo each other in giving costly entertainments. It was this mode of life that necessitated the pretty dresses, "as many as two a day" against which Geiler of Kaisersberg railed.

Every little German principality had its court, and in nearly all these courts corruption reigned. The Italian or the Frenchman may be gracefully, even captivatingly wicked. But in a German sensuality is invariably coarse, pronounced, and revolting. There is something fiercely

Titanic in a German's embrace of evil. The student, who, leaving the doings of kings and queens, untangles thread by thread the biography of lesser men and women connected with these old German courts, has before him entertainment for a lifetime. In each of these small court circles he will find stories of sin, passion, and remorse, beside which the tales of a D'Annunzio, a Balzac, or a Zola seem mere inchoate records of childish bravado.

The enormous effect of vice upon the women of the Renaissance and Reformation periods cannot be ignored in any true picture of the time. Man's lust was an accepted factor of everyday life. Very early, as we have noted in a preceding chapter, houses of prostitution were established and regulated by law. The woman superintendent put in charge of such a house was required to swear formally that she would "serve the best interests of the city" loyally; *i. e.*, she must increase the revenues. She swore to "induce to come in as many girls as possible." The inmates of a house of prostitution continued to wear a distinctive dress whenever they appeared on the streets. This uniform served a double purpose. It was a convenience to the men, and it prevented the girls from escaping easily. When a distinguished visitor came to town, he was, even during the Reformation period, sometimes taken, soon after his arrival, to one of these houses by the chief magistrate, and the prettiest girls—sometimes richly dressed, sometimes naked—were brought before him for choice. Even in some private houses a similar form of hospitality was shown to male visitors, the prettiest maids of the house being detailed to "attend" such visitors.

The lot of a German workingwoman in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries was very hard. Her hours of work were from sunrise to sunset. If she lived in the country, she did all the ordinary housework for a large

family; she planted and harvested, she attended to the cattle, she sheared the sheep, gathered the flax, spun and wove the linen and wool, bleached or dyed the finished cloth, and with her needle fashioned it into garments for her husband, her children, and herself. In the country, grand ladies often had workrooms where as many as three hundred girls were employed. A city workingwoman was shut out by the guilds from any remunerative labor. She could seldom earn more than her board, no matter how hard she might work. Women's wages, except for sin, were pitifully meagre. That the majority of German workingwomen did remain chaste in spite of the ever present temptations toward vice speaks volumes in praise of the German feminine character.

In both city and country, spinning was looked upon as woman's natural occupation. "She was pious and spun" is a common epitaph upon sixteenth century tombstones in Germany. "Let men fight and women spin," preached Berthold von Regensberg. Almost as soon as a girl baby could walk she was taught to spin. Little Gertrude Sastrow, at the age of five, asked one day what the princes at the Diet did. Her brother replied: "They determine what shall be done in the empire." "Then," her brother relates, "the little maiden at her distaff gave a deep sigh and said dolefully,—'Oh, good God, if they would only decree that little girls should not spin!'"

Luther bitterly resented the accusation that his teachings were responsible for the Peasant's War. He declared, truly enough, that the peasants, long ground between the upper and nether millstones of an oppressive nobility and a greedy merchant monopoly, had again and again revolted long before he was born. Nevertheless, it cannot be denied that Protestantism, as representing individualism, had much to do with the social upheavals of the sixteenth and

seventeenth centuries. Both the Renaissance and the Reformation, or rather, the underlying force which produced both, made tremendously for Democracy.

The peasant woman's lot was doubly hard. The horrible outrages committed upon her during war make one's blood run cold even now, after centuries have passed. In time of peace, too often, she was considered little better than a beast of burden. Men of the peasant class gathered hazy notions of the world and its doings at the alehouses. But the cat or dog upon the hearth was not more dumb, intellectually, than the average peasant woman. One searches the records of history in vain to find, during the Renaissance and Reformation periods, a single peasant woman anywhere in Germany who rose notably above her class.

The influence of Marguerite of Austria, aunt, guardian, and closest adviser of Charles V. upon the destiny of Germany was incalculably great. That Charles, instead of his rival, Francis I. of France, was chosen emperor was mainly due to Marguerite's persistent efforts in behalf of her nephew, whom she idolized. Marguerite kept the Fuggers constantly on Charles's side—a stroke of wisdom that carried the election. The life story of Marguerite of Austria, daughter of Maximilian and granddaughter of Charles the Bold, is almost unknown to English readers. It is worth telling at some length for it illustrates an important phase in the history of German womanhood—the way in which royal girls were disposed of in marriage.

Storms in the life of Marguerite began long before the Reformation. At the age of two years she lost her mother, beautiful Mary of Burgundy, daughter of Charles the Bold. The young queen's last words were spoken to her "Daisy." "Farewell, farewell, my sweetest little daughter," she murmured. "Thou art too soon left motherless." At the age of four, Marguerite, for political reasons, was

married to the Dauphin of France, afterward known as Charles VIII., who was ten years her senior. The marriage was solemnized with great pomp at Amboise. After the ceremony the tired, bewildered baby was returned to her good governess, Madame Secrète.

Marguerite, up to her twelfth year, was educated wholly with a view to her future position as Queen of France. But the pride of Charles the Bold ran in the little maid's veins. She never forgot that she was the "daughter of Cæsar." Cæsar himself—"Our Max," "Beggar Max," "Spendthrift Max," "Mayor of Augsburg," "Hunter Max," as he was variously called by his people, but always with a "God bless him!" added—could, and a hundred times a day did, easily throw off the imperial dignity; but stately little Marguerite never laid hers aside, even in her childish games with the French royal children. She is described as possessing "set will, affectionate nature, and unusual zeal for study."

At the age of twelve, a crushing blow fell upon this proud little daughter of Cæsar. To gain a province, her husband divorced her and married Anne of Brittany. The latter maid was kidnapped during a journey through France and held prisoner in a castle until she agreed to the marriage, which was then speedily effected. Marguerite haughtily refused to resign the title, "Queen of France," which she had borne for eight years. For seventeen months there were, therefore, two Queens of France—Anne at Paris, and Marguerite holding her court at Amboise. Even the annals of royalty have never shown a more complicated situation. Anne of Brittany was, legally, for she had been married by proxy to Maximilian—Marguerite's stepmother. Now, by her enforced marriage to Charles, Anne found herself the rival of her nominal stepdaughter.

Maximilian, doubly furious against France, demanded that Marguerite's dowry be returned and that she be sent back to him with regal honors. It was a hard journey for a high-spirited girl. Every town along the route held fêtes and was brightly illuminated as she passed through it. These municipal displays, either from stupidity or malice, were mostly in execrable taste. On every hand, blazoned in fire, Marguerite saw her own name—sometimes even her own portrait—coupled with that of the king who had cast her off. But she exhibited few outward signs of inward shame. Once at Cambrai, when the crowd shouted—"*Noël, Noël;*" she called in a clear, far-reaching tone—"Say not '*Noël,*' but cry, 'Long live Burgundy!'" Once, at dinner in a French town through which she passed, lament was made that the vintage had been blighted; and she said: "Small wonder that the grapes wither in a country where oaths are broken!"

But Marguerite—or, rather, her wealth—was not long without suitors. Don Juan of Austria, son of Ferdinand and Isabella, offered himself and was accepted by Maximilian. There was a brief delay in the negotiations and Don Juan, exasperated thereby, impudently reminded the emperor that a divorced princess ought to come cheaper than either a widow or a maid. At about the same time Marguerite's brother, Philip the Handsome, was betrothed to Don Juan's sister, Juana. The two girls travelled together from Brussels as far as Liége, where Philip was to be married. There was a great contrast between the two—Marguerite calm, stately, fair, was ruled always by reason; and Juana dark, intense, was governed by emotion. Upon this journey, however, youth and common interests must have made the two girls companionable to each other. No prophetic sign warned either of sorrows which the future held in store. The following letter, lately printed

in *Secret Memoirs of the House of Austria,* gives the story of Juana's tragedy. Another letter, to which we shall refer later, proves that Marguerite's love passion, though free from crime, unlike Juana's, was no less deep and real than that of her hot-blooded southern sister. The letter was written by one of Philip's generals. An extract from it says: "The good King Philip was suspected by his Queen of an amour, and that without reason, as was afterward discovered, but she took it so much and so grievously to heart that she at last resolved to kill her lord and husband in revenge for it. As women are so easily moved and impelled, according to the old adage 'they have long robes but short counsels,' she got so utterly beside herself as to poison her good husband, although it was to her own loss. Shortly after, she found out that she had been wrong, and that she had allowed her quick temper to get the better of her. Then she began to rue what she had done, and found no rest, tormented as she was by the furies of remorse; and as she had her husband no more and could not get him back, she began to love him twice as well as before, and grieved and fretted so violently that at last she went out of her mind altogether and became quite childish."

For months Juana kept Philip's embalmed body in her room, frequently embracing it in an agony of grief. When, at last, it was buried she could not rest until it was exhumed. Then she travelled with it at night by the light of torches all through Spain. Curiously enough, a soothsayer had once told Philip that he would make longer journeys through his kingdom after his death than he had ever taken while living.

Philip the Handsome had one strong trait in his otherwise weak nature. He was devotedly attached to his sister Marguerite. He loved her better than anything else

on earth except himself. She loved him, and his children after him for his sake, with no thought of self. When Marguerite left the Netherlands for Spain where her marriage with Don Juan was to take place, Philip went with her to the seacoast. The ship in which Marguerite and her suite sailed was threatened with destruction. Marguerite calmly dressed herself in her richest robes and jewels in order that her body, if washed ashore, might be easily identified. Then under one of her splendid bracelets she slipped a band of oiled silk containing an epitaph written by herself:

"Cy gise Margot, la gente damoysella,
Qui eust deux maris, et si morut pucelle."

This has been roughly translated thus:

"Beneath this tomb the high-born Margaret's laid,
Who had two husbands and yet died a maid."

In this epitaph we get one of the few hints of the fact that Marguerite had inherited her father's whimsical sense of humor. Her letters and her papers generally seem written under the shadow of court etiquette. Her acts, however, and many of her recorded conversations, show a quick appreciation of ludicrous or grotesque situations.

But the young poetess's epitaph was premature. The ship made the coast of England in safety. The princess was invited to visit Henry VII. of England; which invitation she accepted with the result that she was, says the old historian, "much caressyed by the whole Court." Whether Marguerite at this time met Charles Brandon (afterward the Duke of Suffolk) who was destined secretly to play an important part in her love affairs, is unknown, but it is probable that she did. Shortly after, her marriage—a magnificent ceremony—took place at Madrid.

Once more a crown glittered before the ambitious girl's eyes, and again it was dashed from her. Six months after their marriage, Don Juan suddenly died. Marguerite returned to Germany. Again she married, this time Philibert of Savoy, who seems to have loved her deeply; he, too, soon died. Twice a widow and once divorced, Marguerite at the age of twenty-five returned to her father's court, declaring that no political exigencies should again force her into matrimony. About this time, she adopted her strange, sad motto: *Spoliat mors munera nostra* (Death ever destroys what is granted to us). A pathetic little poem—it loses much in translation—written by Marguerite at this time is still preserved:

"Must I thus ever languish on?
Must I, alas, thus die alone?
Shall none my tears and anguish know?
From childhood, I have suffered so!
Too long it lasts—this weary woe."

As Thackeray said long afterward of the work of another poet-princess: "These plaintive lines are more touching than better poetry."

Still another sorrow was in store for Marguerite. Her beloved brother, Philip the Handsome, died. The manner of his death we know. It was his dying request that his sister Marguerite, then regent of the Netherlands, should have the guardianship of his five children, Charles, Leonora, Isabel, Marie, and Catalina. The maternal instinct never beat more strongly in any woman's heart than in that of the royal Marguerite. Faithfully, wisely, lovingly, she fulfilled her brother's trust.

Another crown was offered Marguerite: Henry VII. of England sought her in marriage. Her father wished her to accept this suitor, but Marguerite persistently refused. Much correspondence passed between Maximilian and his

daughter at this time. From it we learn little of Marguerite's inner life, but the glimpses of Maximilian are charming. Had he not been sure that his daughter would appreciate his humorous allusions and his nonsensical fancies, he would never have written as he did. In regard to his plan for settling the difficulties between Church and State by the startling expedient of making himself Pope, he writes:

"VERY DEAR AND MOST BELOVED DAUGHTER:

"We send the Bishop of Greece to-morrow to Rome, to the Pope, to find some means of agreeing with him to take us for a coadjutor, so that after his death we may be sure of having his papacy, and of becoming a priest, and you will be obliged after my death to worship me, of which I shall be extremely proud. I have also begun to sound the cardinals, with whom two or three thousand ducats will do me great service, considering the partiality which they already exhibit.

"P. S.—The Pope has intermittent fever. Cannot live long."

No better business woman ever lived than royal Marguerite. Her first act as regent was the abrogation of several of her father's unwise, self-cheating treaties. She encouraged trade, secured financial stability in her realm, always kept on good terms with the Fuggers, the money kings of the world, and increased the revenue from all sources. A marriage was planned between her nephew, Charles, and Mary Tudor, the youngest daughter of Henry VII.

When Henry VIII., in the war between France and England, led an army to the battle of Guinegatte, Marguerite invited him to visit her at Lille. Did Marguerite know when she sent her letter of invitation that with

Henry was one whom she had met at the English court and had never forgotten? The following letter, written her from Henry's camp by her confidential messenger, would indicate that she did know. "The Grand Equerry, the second king," mentioned in the letter was Charles Brandon, then Viscount Lisle and later—ennobled by Henry for Marguerite's sake, gossip said—Lord Suffolk. The messenger, Philippe de Brigilles, writes:

"MADAME:

"The Grand Equerry, my Lord Lisle, has been to me to beg of me that I would convey to you his most humble respects and the hearty desire which he had to do you service. I think you know sufficiently well that he is the second king and it is only proper that you should write him a gracious letter, for he it is who does and undoes all. This knoweth God, who give you, Madame, what ever you most desire. From the camp before Thérouanne, this Wednesday last.

"Your most humble and most obedient slave,

"PHILIPPE DE BRIGILLES."

Marguerite was now thirty-three. A portrait of her at Hampton Court shows that she was a fine-looking, if not, strictly speaking, a beautiful woman. The face is oval, the hair, showing from underneath the rather picturesque widow's headdress of the sixteenth century, is brown, the eyes are dark and expressive, the nose Grecian, the lips somewhat full. The hands, resting upon a balcony, are beautiful, with long, tapering fingers.

Brandon is described as "a large man, tall and elegantly proportioned, with dark brown eyes and hair: he was handsome in his countenance, courtly in his manners, and extremely prepossessing in his address."

For the next few months, the soul of Marguerite of Austria was struggling in deep waters. The facts, as clearly as they can be made out through the misty perspective of centuries, seem to be these: Marguerite loved Charles Brandon, then Viscount Lisle and afterward the Duke of Suffolk. He asked her hand in marriage, wooing her passionately. The young and powerful king, Henry VIII., favored Suffolk's suit, even to the point of making several personal appeals to Marguerite, whose pride and her fear of causing a political catastrophe made her hesitate to accept Suffolk. Gossiping rumors concerning the love affair were spread broadcast, and Maximilian, hearing them, became enraged. Marguerite drew back. Henry VIII. pretended to the emperor that he knew nothing about the matter except by hearsay. Brandon accepted the situation and later consoled himself by marrying the youngest sister of the king, the bride first selected for Charles, Mary Tudor.

To give reality and color to the above bare outline of a story that once throbbed with life, a few descriptions and quotations may be permitted.

Henry VIII., with his suite, including Brandon, visited Marguerite at Lille. She in return "accompanied by her young nephew—Charles—and divers other nobles," visited Henry in his camp at Tournay. Henry met them outside the gates and "brought them in with greate triumphe." The chronicler adds: "The noys went that the Lord Lysle made request of marriage to the Ladye Margurite, Duchess of Savoy, and daughter to the Emperor Maximilian. But whether he proffered marriage or not, she favored him highly."

An evening banquet following, a day of tournaments is thus described:

"This night the King made a sumptuous banket of a.c. dishes to the Prince of Castell and the Lady Margarete,

and to all other Lords and ladies and after the banket the ladies daunsed; and then came in the king and a XI in a maske, all richly appareled with bonnettes of gold, and when they had passed the time at their pleasure, the garments of the maske were cast off amongst the ladies, take who could take."

That handsome Charles Brandon and stately Marguerite of Austria "took" each other is proved by the following extracts, made from two letters signed "M" among the Cottonian manuscripts now in the British Museum. The epistles are evidently translations from French originals. They are addressed to "Sir Richard Wingfield, Ambassadour," and are labelled on the outside, in Sir Richard Wingfield's handwriting: *Secrete Matiers of the Duke of Suffolk.* The letters were delivered to Wingfield by Marotin, a confidential servant, whom it is known Marguerite dismissed for having "evile kept" her secrets. As Marotin was at once taken into Maximilian's service it is probable that he was the emperor's informant concerning the Suffolk love affair. For nearly a year afterward, intercourse between the emperor and his daughter was confined to the coldest formalities.

In the case of a few words, liberties have here been taken with Sir Richard Wingfield's spelling in order to make the letter intelligible to modern readers:

"The Archduchess Marguerite to Sir Richard Wingfield.

"My Ladye began this wryting before the koming of Marrotin, who came to Lavoyne on Sundaye last."

"My Lorde Ambassadoure:

"Sythe that I see that I may not have tydynges from the Emperor so soon, it seemeth me that I shulde do welle no longer to tarry to depeche this gentleman. And for that my lettres addressyed to the King and the Duke—of

that I dare not aventure me to wryte on to them so at lengthe of thys bisyness—I fear me to be evile kept, I me determine to wrythe to you at lengthe that you may the better advertise them of myne intent."

She then explains that her intent is to put a stop to the whole matter. Fear of endangering the prospects of her idolized nephew, Charles, should she make a mésalliance, was probably Marguerite's main reason for disobeying the dictates of her heart. Marguerite was a politician, clear-headed, keen, cool, calculating; but she was also a very human woman. She wished Sir Richard to think well of her—she desired the king to know that she did not blame him in the matter. Above all, she wished Suffolk to understand that while she rejected him she still remained true to him. She told Wingfield how "at severall occaysions" the king pleaded for his friend and favorite courtier:

"He sayde that I was yet too young for to abide thus, and that the ladyes of hys contree dyd remarye at fifty and three score yeeres." But Marguerite was firm. She says: "Whereupon I answered hym that I hadde never hadde wylle so to do and that I was too muche unhappy in hosbondes, but he wolde nott beleve me."

Throughout the letters, Suffolk (Brandon) is referred to by Marguerite as the "Personnage." Again the king told her that his friend was most unhappy, fearing she would marry someone else.

"Wyche I promised to hym," says Marguerite, "I schulde not do." But the "Personnage," who appears to have been present at this interview, was not satisfied. Marguerite says: "He mayde me promyse in his hands that how soever I shulde be pressed by my father, or otherwyse, I should not make alyance of maryage with Prynce off the worlde."

The king was sometimes discreetly absent when the two met.

"At the head of a koppboorde," a few days later, Suffolk made Marguerite renew her promise to him. Marguerite refers also to certain "gracyewse letters" that passed between herself and her English suitor. The report had got abroad in the court that Suffolk had in his possession a diamond ring known to belong to the archduchess. She confesses the truth of the rumor:

"One night at Tournaye, being at the bankett, after the bankett, he put hymself upon hys knees before me, and hym playing, he drew from my finger the rynge, and put it on hys finger, and sythe shewed it me. And I took to Lawe, and to hym sayde that he was a theefe, and that I thowte not the King hadde wyth hym ledde theeves out of hys contree." Somehow, one feels glad of that half-hour "after the bankett" in Marguerite's hard life.

Brandon behaved well in the matter when he found that Marguerite had fully made up her mind to end their friendship. His daughter by his first wife and an adopted daughter were both under Marguerite's care at her court, and Suffolk offered to remove them if the archduchess wished him to do so. Another young English girl also was under Marguerite's charge, Anne Bullen, better known to history as Anne Boleyn. Suffolk, about this time, adopted for his shield the singular motto: "Who can hold that will away?"

The affair with the Duke of Suffolk being over, Marguerite plunged into politics, straining every nerve to secure the imperial succession for Charles against the new claimant who had arisen, Francis I. of France. When her help was no longer needed by the young emperor, Marguerite retired to her favorite spot, Malines. There she held a quiet court, devoting herself to study. When

remonstrated with upon the score of health for confining herself too closely to books, she replied: "When the mind has congenial employment, the body will always take care of itself." At the Field of the Cloth of Gold, and also at Cambrai,—where the "Ladies' Peace" treaty was arranged by herself and Louise of Savoy,—Marguerite again met her old lover, the Duke of Suffolk. If history holds any records of that meeting, they are still hidden in her secret archives.

The Renaissance and the Reformation both touched Marguerite of Austria closely. Toward the Renaissance she was kindly and even gratefully inclined. For Protestantism, however, she had only scorn and hatred. Her natural benevolence kept her from the cruel persecutions which darkened the reign of another Marguerite—Marguerite of Parma—in the Netherlands. But Marguerite of Austria, nevertheless, was openly committed to "the extermination of the Lutherans." That her niece Isabel died in the new and hated faith was a source of great sorrow to her. Isabel, with her last breath, committed her children to her aunt Marguerite's care; and Marguerite, whose life had been largely spent in rearing other women's children, took these little orphans also to her heart.

When the Reformation came, even the gay, profligate courts of the German principalities were sobered. At first, in certain cases, the sudden seriousness caused by Luther's ringing call took the form of attempted evasion of the consequences of sin. Philip of Hesse, a big, handsome prince into whose material nature a bit of the new leaven had fallen, asked "Pope Luther" to let him marry a second wife while his first was living. He did not propose to put the first away; he would provide for both. In extenuation of this suggested bigamy he pleaded—truly enough—that Christine, his spouse, was addicted to

over-indulgence in strong drink, and, also, was personally repulsive. He wished to marry Katharine von Saal, one of the court ladies. It was a crucial moment for Protestantism. Philip's powerful aid would perhaps save the new faith. Long ago, Luther had twice given it as his opinion that the Scriptures sanctioned plural marriages. The dispensation was granted. The second marriage took place, Christine agreeing placidly. Katharine von Saal made Philip a good wife, and the three—Christine being left in undisturbed enjoyment of her daily dram—lived, it seems, harmoniously enough.

A very different story is that of another court. Joachim, Elector of Brandenburg, bitterly opposed the new faith, but his wife became a convert. The latter partook of the sacrament in both kinds, and then—fearing vengeance from her angry lord and master—fled from his court to a refuge near Lotha. Her husband refused to take her back, but he allowed her children to visit her. Carlyle, in his *Frederick the Great,* tells the story.

The vexed question,—Which has done more to advance the world, the Renaissance or the Reformation? will probably never be satisfactorily settled. At the best, 'tis rather a shallow question, born of provincial intelligence. Without the Renaissance there could have been no Reformation. Without the Reformation, the Renaissance, contenting itself with past culture, would never have become the active force it is in the world to-day. To both, the twentieth century woman owes much.

Chapter VIII

An Era of Intellectual Desolation

VIII

AN ERA OF INTELLECTUAL DESOLATION

WAR! War! War! From that pregnant day in 1521 when Luther, at Worms, cried: "Here I stand, I cannot do otherwise, God help me!" Germany, for nearly three centuries, was never, long at a time, free from bloody strife. In some districts of the empire men and women were conceived in time of war, born in time of war, lived to the Scripturally allotted age of threescore years and ten in time of war, died, and were buried, leaving war to rage for years to come above their unquiet, desecrated graves.

In these disintegrating centuries, women of all classes suffered to the uttermost. The lowest became beasts, like the men who debauched them. By thousands, and tens of thousands, women followed the armies. Every soldier, from the private to the highest officer, was allowed to take with him into the field his wife or mistress—frequently both—and as many other female relatives as he pleased. Even grandmothers were frequently seen in camp. Schiller's picture of the old marketwoman in *Wallenstein's Camp* is not overdrawn.

Women in the army cooked, washed, mended, and, more or less skilfully, nursed the sick and wounded. They were not taken to the field, however, as ministering angels. The bald truth is that women were kept in the army for the sole purpose of gratifying man's lust. With every

newly recruited regiment that started for the front went hundreds of respectable young girls torn unwillingly from their humble homes. After every decisive battle, women formed a large part of the spoils of war borne off by the victors. Children, mostly born out of wedlock, swarmed. Gustavus Adolphus made a vain attempt to keep women out of the army. He established tent schools for the children. Women in the field were under martial law. Frequently, for minor offences they were stripped, flogged, and drummed out of camp. The discipline of the field schools was very severe. Once, it is related, a cannon ball crashed through a school tent, killing half a dozen children. But the survivors, more afraid of their schoolmaster than of death, kept on with their tasks as if nothing had happened.

For woman there could be, there was, but one outcome of this army life,—moral degradation. Grimmelshausen, in his *Simplicius Simplicissimus,* one of the greatest satires ever written, gives a horribly revolting picture of women in camp during the Thirty Years' War. There is no doubt that the picture is a true one, for Grimmelshausen, a nobleman and a powerful writer, was an eyewitness of the horrors which he describes in this life story of a vagabond adventurer in the long and terrible war.

Neither wealth nor high birth could screen women from the anxieties, the sorrows, and the miseries of war. Philippine Welser, of Augsburg, was probably the last patrician woman in Germany to receive Renaissance training. The Welser family—of burgher-merchant origin, ennobled by royal favor—was famous for its upright men and its pious, scholarly women no less than for its enormous wealth. The story of Philippine Welser and her lover-husband, Prince Ferdinand, son of Emperor Ferdinand I. and favorite nephew of Charles V., contrasts pleasantly

with the cruel, coldly selfish treatment of most princely lovers in that war-brutalized age.

According to legend, Philippine Welser first saw "Prince Ferdinand of the Golden Locks" as he rode past her father's house in old Haymarket Square, at the head of a glittering procession. Philippine, a vision of pink and white girlish beauty, stood at a long, open window, looking down on the gorgeous pageant. The prince saluted her. Their eyes met, and straightway, after the old fashion which never quite goes out of date anywhere in the world, either in war or in peace, they fell in love.

At the public ball that evening, in Augsburg's new hall of gold, the prince showed the merchant-banker's fair daughter marked attention, dancing with her often. In the weeks that followed, Prince Ferdinand's intimate friend, Count Ladislaw von Sternberg, was seen almost daily going back and forth between the old Welser house and the archducal palace near the Cathedral.

At last the prince left Augsburg. A few days later Philippine Welser also disappeared down the street which now bears her name. Henceforth her native city knew her no more. She was in Bohemia, with her aunt Katharine, wife of the knight George von Loxan. An imperial castle crowned a neighboring height. Prince Ferdinand suddenly discovered that affairs in his Bohemian inheritance needed his immediate personal attention. He resided at the castle for several weeks, making frequent visits to the Loxan estate. A formal betrothal took place in the presence of a priest, Philippine's aunt, and other witnesses. Through nine years of betrothal and twenty-three of married life, the archduke was true to Philippine. War separated them for years at a time, but their love suffered no diminution. The archduke Ferdinand was a genuine scion of an impetuously loyal race. From Maximilian I.,

whose heart, by his own command, was placed in the tomb of fair Mary of Burgundy, down to Don John and to unfortunate Rudolph in the nineteenth century, Habsburg princes have ever been ready to cast aside rank, wealth, and power for love.

Sometimes, hiding under the soiled robe of politics, love actually slips into a state marriage, as in the union of Elizabeth Stuart of England with Frederick, Prince of the Palatinate, better known to history as the "Winter King" of Bohemia.

Though not German by birth, Elizabeth, through good and through evil report, so thoroughly identified herself with her husband's interests and people, and became the ancestress of so many famous rulers,—among whom are Frederick the Great, Queen Victoria, and Emperor William I.,—that her story properly deserves a place in any history of German womanhood.

Elizabeth possessed the grace, beauty, and charm of manner common to the Stuarts. To these gifts were added wit, a kindly sense of humor, and an honest loyalty of spirit peculiarly her own. The title she won in Germany, "the Queen of Hearts," seems to have been a spontaneous and well-deserved tribute. Between Elizabeth Stuart and her elder brother Henry, the beloved and manly Prince of Wales, who died at the age of eighteen, the closest love and sympathy existed. Out of many suitors for his sister's hand, Frederick, Prince of the Palatine, was Prince Henry's choice. The two young men loved and respected each other. Together they had ridden, hunted, played tennis and other athletic games, Elizabeth often being an interested spectator of their friendly contests. The dying prince's last words were half-delirious ramblings concerning his sister's marriage to Prince Frederick.

Political exigencies were pressing. As usual, war loomed. Prince Henry's death, therefore, delayed the marriage but a few days. Frederick possessed a sweet and lovable nature. His letters, to this day, strangely win the reader's heart. To the stricken sister, mourning the loss of her idolized brother, the tenderness of Prince Frederick was balm. Her bridegroom had been her dead brother's friend. To loyal-hearted Elizabeth Stuart that memory was far more precious than the diamond rose-wreath crown which her lover brought her from the Palatinate. Yet the glittering coronet—it may be seen to-day in Munich—was very beautiful. Clear, sparkling, as if made of ice shot through by sunlight, it seems a fit ornament for a young "Winter Queen."

The bridal journey to the Palatine was a triumphal progress. Elizabeth and Frederick were like two children newly escaped from school. They cast convention to the winds. The court chamberlain was in despair. But the two happy lovers only laughed at him and his "precedents." They said they would make new precedents, and they did. In Nürnberg they invited themselves to a burgher wedding. The bride was a Welser, a distant cousin of Philippine Welser. Both Elizabeth and her husband danced at this wedding until after midnight. Prince Frederick, indeed, danced so heartily, says an old chronicler, "that he did twirl some of the maidens with him clean out into the street."

About this time died the Emperor Matthias, successor of Ferdinand I. The Protestant Union earnestly wished to prevent the election of the Catholic Ferdinand, King of Bohemia, as emperor. An opportune uprising of Protestants in Bohemia served as a pretext for placing Frederick of the Palatinate, head of the Protestant Union, upon the throne of Bohemia. The whole world knows the story of

that brief, brilliant, winter reign of Frederick and Elizabeth in Bohemia.

The Stuart "Queen of Hearts" was more popular in Bohemia than her Calvinistic husband. Rich presents of money and plate were made to her. A delegation of the wives of the most prominent citizens waited upon her in Prague. Behind them slowly moved nine large wagons loaded with gifts. Among other presents was a baby's entire outfit, including a stately cradle made of ebony and ornamented with gold and precious jewels. The cradle was needed, for Elizabeth bore thirteen children.

The king and queen were too unconventional to please the stiff Bohemian nobility. The young royal couple gave mortal offence once to the entire court by coasting down hill with a lot of school children. The conspicuous costume worn by his majesty on that unfortunate day seems to have been an added injury to court etiquette. He wore, we are told, "a satin fur-trimmed pelisse and a large white hat with long, floating yellow plumes."

But days of childish gayety were well-nigh passed for Frederick and Elizabeth. Sorrow, humiliation, poverty awaited them. Ferdinand II. was triumphantly elected. One of the new emperor's first acts was to confiscate Frederick's principality of the Rhine Palatinate and make it over to a Bavarian Prince. His next act was to send a force under Tilly to regain the Bohemian throne. Frederick made no resistance worthy of the name. Instead, he fled with his family.

Never was royal fall more humiliating. Landless, penniless, almost friendless, Frederick and Elizabeth suddenly found themselves the laughing-stock of Europe. It was a brutal age, a vulgarly coarse age. Minor incidents often show most clearly the progress of civilization. To-day a woman dragged down by her husband's fall is screened.

Not so in Elizabeth Stuart's time. The press of that day lampooned her more unmercifully than it did her unfortunate consort. Cruel cartoons, picturing her in a beggar's dress were scattered broadcast. King James I. offered his daughter an asylum in England, but she answered proudly: "My place while I live is by my husband's side. I shall never forsake him."

So intense was Elizabeth's love for her husband that it practically crowded out all other love except the love for her dead brother. Even of her children she said: "I love them more because they are his than for themselves or for my own comfort." For three days after Frederick's death Elizabeth neither spoke nor ate nor wept. To the day of her own death, her room, sometimes a pitifully poor room for a king's daughter and a king's wife, was draped in black in memory of her husband.

The eldest daughter of Elizabeth and Frederick—also an Elizabeth—was a diligent student of philosophy. Descartes honored her with his friendship. For many years she corresponded with the great philosopher. In youth, this Elizabeth was very pretty—a vivacious, black-haired, brown-eyed beauty, with a slender aquiline nose which tried her sorely by turning unbecomingly red at times. The poverty-stricken Palatine princesses, living as poor relations, first at this court, then at that, kept up courage by sharpening their wits on one another. One day when the annoying nose was blushing, Elizabeth's next younger sister, Louise, said: "Come, it is time to attend the audience of our cousin, the Queen," and Elizabeth answered aggrievedly: "Do you expect me to go with this nose?" To which quick-witted Louise replied: "Do you expect me to wait until you grow another one?"

Elizabeth, perhaps to gain leisure to study her beloved subject, philosophy, entered the Lutheran convent at

Herfort, becoming later its abbess. Louise became abbess of a Catholic convent at Naubisson, and a very lively and comfortable, if not exactly moral, abbess she made. A third sister, Henrietta, took to preserves instead of either philosophy or religion. She married, and lived happily ever after among her sticky pots and kettles. Not the least blessed of the three, to judge from her letters, was the lot of practical Henrietta.

At the end of the Thirty Years' War, Germany lay prostrate, bleeding at a thousand wounds. The condition of the peasant women was not greatly improved. They had more cows to milk, it is true; but, on the other hand, they were furnished with fewer books from which to draw mental nourishment. The public schools had gone to ruin. Even the boys were not properly taught. "Our wenches learn nothing," an exceptionally interested father complains.

The old manufacturing interests, like weaving by hand, in which women formerly aided, had declined. Working-women in the cities found it hard to earn a living. By losses resulting from the war, many of the genteel poor, ladies born and bred, had been forced into the ranks of the workers. These timid unfortunates became nursery governesses in families of the impoverished nobility, day teachers, court ladies without salary, and the like. The personal secrets of the children of labor are kept only in the archives of solitary human hearts; else, many a story of tragedy, love, and brave self-denial might be written from the bitter experiences of these pioneer women workers. In considering the condition of workingwomen during this unhappy period, the word "Vice," written large, must be constantly kept in mind. It was not a question of temptation to vice; the problem, instead, was how a respectable workingwoman could possibly escape being driven into sin by man's physical force.

The counter reformation, set in motion by the wonderful intellect of Ignatius Loyola, had a mighty influence upon women in certain parts of the empire. "In the year 1551," says Steinmetz, "the Jesuits had no fixed position in Germany. In 1556 they had overspread Franconia, Swabia, Rhineland, Austria, Hungary, Bohemia, and Bavaria." This rapid but quiet growth of the Society of Jesus was due largely to the influence of a comparatively few rich, intelligent Catholic women, like Maria of Bavaria.

The relation between women and early Jesuitism bears out the old assertion that kicks and beatings increase both canine and feminine affection. Ignatius Loyola himself compared woman to the devil. He writes: "Our enemy imitates the nature and manner of a woman as to her weakness and frowardness. For, as a woman, quarrelling with her husband, if she sees him with erect, firm aspect, ready to resist her, instantly loses courage and turns on her heel, but if she perceive he is timid and inclined to slink off, her audacity knows no bounds, and she pounces upon him, ferociously. Thus the devil," etc.

Ignatius Loyola was magnificently in earnest. He remembered the Medician Papal courts and their scandal. He would have his order endangered by no looseness of priestly morals. His rules were of iron strictness. Moreover, and this greatly to his official advantage, he knew women. Especially well he knew, too, the sentimental, introspective, hero-worshipping woman. The spiritual direction of three such women for a short time gave him more trouble, he afterward declared, than the government of his whole world-spread order. Accordingly, he decreed:

"No woman shall come twice to confession in one day."

"If the female penitents pretend to scruples of conscience, the confessors are to tell them 'not to relate tales

and repeat trifles.' Sometimes they must be silenced at once, for if they are truly disturbed by conscience there will be no need of prolixity."

"Consolation and advice to women are to be given in an open part of the church."

Visits to women were also severely restricted. They must be confined to women of rank and consequence. The women visited must be those who have rendered signally important service to the order. Visits must be agreeable to the husband or other ruling male relative of the woman visited. Confession by a woman was always to be witnessed by another priest, stationed near the confessor.

A Jesuit of advanced age and ancient probity once infringed this last order and listened to a woman penitent without witnesses. Loyola called eight priests together and made the old Jesuit scourge himself on his naked back till each of the priests had repeated one of the penitential psalms.

To do all things vehemently has always been a German trait. According to Hasenmüller, a German Jesuit turned Lutheran, many of Loyola's disciples in Germany exceeded their chief in their expressed contempt for women. Some Jesuit priests, he says, expectorated whenever a woman's name was mentioned. Others would eat no dish prepared by a woman. One cried: "When I think of a woman my stomach rises and my blood is up." Another exclaimed: "It grieves me and I am ashamed that a woman brought me into the world."

The emotional element in Jesuitism appealed strongly to women. The general contempt for their sex expressed by Jesuit priests made special notice all the more valuable. No modern woman of fashion who has secured for her drawing room the first appearance of a social lion is

more elated thereby than were the few queens, princesses, and women of wealth who, in the early days of the order, were honored by the notice of Jesuit priests. Add to this the fact that the Jesuits were, in general, a picked body of young, strong, handsome men of gracious manners and fascinating address, and we have the secret of their power over women. Small wonder that women worked indefatigably to advance the interests of the new order.

Allied to the Jesuits only by the smarting, chafing tie of persecution were the Jewish women. After the Thirty Years' War there were many of these in Germany. Their descendants, even when Christians, were debarred from entering the Society of Jesus. The babes of Jewish mothers were often forcibly baptized. Freytag quotes a pathetic story told in an old pamphlet written by two Jesuit fathers, Eder and Christel.

One Samuel Metzel was converted to Christianity. His wife refused to forsake her ancestral faith. Her four children were taken away from her and placed in Christian families. She was about to bring a fifth child into the world. In terror lest she should lose this one too, she hid herself in a retired spot. Her oldest little girl unconsciously betrayed the mother's hiding place. When the babe was born the father and the two priests sent a Christian midwife to baptize and kidnap it. Three "pious ladies" accompanied the midwife.

When the Jewish mother saw that the midwife baptized her newborn babe, she "sprang frantically from her bed and with vehement cries tore the infant from the woman's arms." The "pious ladies" sent for masculine help. The city judge, with armed men, entered the room and "tried to separate the now little Christian son from his mother. But as she, like a frantic one, held the child so tightly clasped in her arms, they desisted, fearing to stifle the

babe, and the judicious judge contented himself with strictly forbidding the Jews in the house to try to make a Jew of the child." The Lord Count of the empire, when appealed to, decided that the child must be delivered to its father. The priestly historians add, with evident pride and satisfaction: "Not long after, the mother who had so stubbornly adhered to Judaism gave in and was baptized."

When the plague swept Germany, the Jesuits and their women coadjutors were magnificent in their self-forgetfulness and unremitting work of succor. Splendidly, too, as a rule, did they stand by one unfortunate class of women—the so-called witches of the seventeenth century. It was a Jesuit priest, the noble Frederick von Spee, who, when asked by the Elector of Mainz why his hair had turned white at the early age of forty, replied: "Sire, it is because I have accompanied to the stake so many women accused of witchcraft—not one of whom was guilty."

The persecution of so-called witches grew to fearful proportions in the seventeenth century. No ugly old woman who had village enemies was safe from arrest and execution on a charge of witchcraft. The following statistics from the small district of Drachenfels are typical, as in every other town of the empire similar conditions prevailed.

Between July, 1630, and December, 1631, and between November, 1643, and May, 1645, ninety-two out of the eight hundred inhabitants of the district were executed for witchcraft. Every second house furnished at least one victim. Sometimes four or five out of a single family were accused. The youngest woman burned was twenty-nine years of age. The others were between fifty-five and eighty. Confessions were secured by the use of the rack and other horrible tortures. The confessions were always similar, a mere echo of the stories told around

every village hearth on winter evenings. The alleged witch had sickened cattle. She had sought at midnight the woodland dancing place of evil spirits or had ridden through the air on a broomstick. She had made a compact with the devil, etc., etc.

But confession was not considered evidence enough. Accomplices must be declared. Just here, sometimes, splendid heroism came in, as in the case of Frau Merl of Drachenfels. Neither the rack, the thumbscrew, nor ice-cold water poured over her could induce her to name as co-witch any but dead women. Through three courts they dragged her case. There was even a chance of saving her own life if she would implicate certain other suspected persons. Instead, however, she went alone to the stake. One wishes that Von Spee might have walked beside her, whispering words of consolation.

A minor cause of woman's degradation in this unhappy age of her history was the prevalence of drunkenness. An official map was once issued that showed drinking districts, places being marked as "ever drunk," "mostly drunk," "half drunk," etc. "No drunk" did not exist even as an imaginary geographical line.

From the lowest strata of society to the highest women were made miserable by this evil of intemperance. The intoxicated peasant knocked his wife down and kicked her. The cultured prince, inflamed by wine and anger, slapped my lady's face at the royal dinner table before the whole court.

Riehl, in his *History of the Physical Development of the German People,* devotes one chapter to the gradual "Divergence of the Sexes." He makes the interesting suggestion, which reflection and observation seem to confirm, that three hundred years ago woman was far more masculine in her personal appearance, even in her anatomy and

physical strength, than now. He calls attention to the almost manly expression and cast of features shown in the portraits of bygone famous beauties like Marie Stuart and others.

Louisa of Orange-Nassau, wife of the great elector, Frederick William (1640–1688), was a remarkable woman. She was self-poised, loving, earnest, virtuous, pious in a helpful, practical fashion,—founding girls' schools, hospitals, and similar institutions of ethical and civic value,—and interested in every department of her husband's manifold activity. When he travelled, she journeyed with him, carefully watching to keep away from him both draughts and bores. On a long military march of four hundred miles from Berlin to the relief of Königsberg she accompanied him, sharing all his hardships without a complaint.

Frederick William built for his wife a pretty country place north of Berlin, which they called Oranienburg (Orange Burg). Louisa made this place a genuine Dutch homestead. Much of Frederick William's youth was spent in Holland, where he wooed and won his bride. Theirs was a true love marriage. Louisa bore him two sons; the elder died young, the younger, Frederick, became the first king of Prussia.

Frederick William was often in a state of ebullition, and many women would have found life with him a hell upon earth. But Louisa of Orange had love, patience, and great good sense. She was happy in his love, and he in hers. "At the moment of her death," says Carlyle, "when speech had fled, he felt from her hand, which lay in his, three slight, slight pressures. 'Farewell!' thrice mutely spoken in that manner,—not easy to forget in this world."

Reasons of state compelled the elector to contract another marriage. His second wife, Dorothea of Holstein,

was a most practical housewife and gardener. Under her energetic direction the palace shone like a new pin. She took a great interest in the planting of trees. Unter den Linden, the now fashionable avenue of Berlin, was, primarily, a project of Dorothea's. Her dairy was wonderfully remunerative, and it was even rumored that she held a controlling interest in a brewery. Thrifty Dorothea certainly was; comfortable to live with, either as wife or stepmother, she evidently was not. She never filled the vacant place in Frederick William's heart. "Ah! my poor Louisa," the great elector, now growing to be the old elector, often exclaimed; "I have not my dear Louisa now. To whom shall I turn for help and comfort?"

Between Dorothea and her stepson, the crown prince Frederick, a constant state of warfare existed. Political enemies even accused Dorothea, without a shadow of truth, of attempting to poison him. At last Frederick withdrew entirely from his father's court, leaving his stepmother and his four stepbrothers in possession of the field. This wearing domestic friction, combined with much political opposition, embittered the last years of the elector's life. He died in 1688; but he had not lived in vain. His private life was honorable; his morals were above reproach. In his conjugal fidelity, he stands a solitary figure upon the threshold of a new and still more debased age.

War was not the sole cause of woman's degradation in this unhappy period. French influence, proceeding from the brilliant, evil court of Louis XIV. (1643–1715), debased her incalculably. Like a moral miasma, this influence permeated every stratum of German society. Upon the innocent and the guilty woman alike its effect was deadly. This destructive conquest over the brain and soul of Germany was not made in a single generation, for, in the beginning, men of the stamp of the great elector and women

like his beloved Louisa fought against the subtle, poisonous influence.

For half a century a German princess lived at the very fountain head of corruption, the court of Louis XIV., and remained pure. Elizabeth Charlotte of the Palatinate was a granddaughter of Elizabeth Stuart. Her father was Carl Ludwig, Prince of the Palatinate, to whom had been restored a part of his paternal inheritance—the Rhine Palatinate. She was educated by her father's sister, Sophia, Electress of Hanover, whom she loved devotedly. To this aunt, through fifty years of life in a corrupt and foreign atmosphere, which to the end she hated, the exiled German princess poured out her heart in letters that, to the historian, have proved of priceless value. Ranke says: "Nowhere else is the uncleanness of French and German national spirit during this epoch so perfectly photographed as in the correspondence of Elizabeth of Orléans with her aunt, the Electress of Hanover."

At the age of nineteen, in the year 1671, Elizabeth Charlotte was married to Philip, Duke of Orléans, only brother of Louis XIV. It was a loveless marriage. Louis XIV. brought about the union for the sake of securing the neutrality of the Prince of the Palatinate in an approaching war between France and Holland. At the time of her marriage Elizabeth was a bright, wholesome, companionable girl. Her husband, a widower of thirty-two, was commonly suspected of being at least accessory to the poisoning of his first wife, Henrietta, a sister of Charles II. of England. In the correspondence of Elizabeth and her aunt, the Duke of Orléans is always referred to as "Monsieur."

Elizabeth's ideal of manhood was the older German ideal, —an honest, fearless man, an enthusiastic hunter, a skilful horseman, a sturdy drinker, and, withal, a stout-handed

Christian, ready at a moment's notice to knock down an old church and build a new one on its site, or, if his faith lay the other way, to fight to the last ditch for the old church against the new. Therefore, there must have been bitterness at the young wife's heart when she penned the following very accurate description of her bridegroom:

"Monsieur has extremely ladylike manners. He cares for nothing so rude as horses and hunting. He cares for nothing, in fact, except the Court receptions, for dainty eating, dancing, and fine toilettes. In short, his tastes are all effeminate."

She gives an equally merciless picture of herself: "I must be very ugly. I have little eyes, a short, thick nose, and a flat, broad face. I am little and thickset. Naturally, I hate mirrors and never injure my self-esteem by looking into one if I can help it." Though Elizabeth was not beautiful, she must have possessed the charm of a thoroughly honest, humorous, and impulsively kind nature. Her boy-cousins and young friends in Germany called her "Comrade" and "Bub." Louis XIV. was very fond of his German sister-in-law. She walked, rode, and hunted with him frequently. Except when he persecuted Germany, she liked the king extremely well.

Although no love existed at any time between the Duke of Orléans and his wife, one point, remarkable in that universally loose age, must be noted. They were true to each other. She writes in later years: "I never had any reason to complain of Monsieur in respect to his behavior so far as other women were concerned." She had no "love affair" in all the years she lived with him. A cabal, seeking to fasten scandal upon her in connection with the Chevalier Sincsanct, utterly failed to produce proof against her, or even to cast public suspicion upon her. She had three children, two boys and a girl. The oldest

boy died at the age of three years. The struggle of Elizabeth's life was to preserve her two remaining children from the impure influences around them, and it was a long and bitter fight. Her daughter she saved. Her son, afterward Regent of France during the long minority of Louis XV., owed all that was good in him—and that was much, in spite of his excesses—to the prayers, the love, the admonitions of his mother. In her efforts to train the children rightly Elizabeth was constantly thwarted by her husband. Philip was entirely controlled by two bad men, the Chevalier de Lorraine and the Marquis d'Essiat. Both hated Elizabeth because of her moral influence over the king. By her efforts, many of their iniquitous plots against women were frustrated. The only way they could punish her was through her children. Madame de Maintenon, whom Elizabeth treated disdainfully, was believed by the duchess to have been an accomplice in the plan to remove her children from her influence.

Madame de Maintenon loved the children of the king's former mistress, Montespan, as if they were her own. Two of these children, Mademoiselle de Blois and the Duke of Maine, were still unmarried. It was now proposed, ostensibly by the king, that Elizabeth's son, the Duke of Chartres, should marry Mademoiselle de Blois. Also, it was planned, that her daughter Charlotte should at the same time become the wife of the young Duke of Maine. Elizabeth was furious. She refused her consent. Saint-Simon, in his *Memoirs,* says of her at this time:

"She belongs to a nation which abhors bastards and mésalliances. Moreover, she has a determined character which forbids all hope that she may ever consent."

The Duke of Chartres—a boy of eighteen—promised his mother to refuse to contract the alliance. Then, the Abbé Dubois, who had great influence over him, secured

a contrary promise. When the king himself urged the duke to marry Mademoiselle de Blois, the youth became confused and said he would leave the decision to his parents. Whereupon, his father, without more ado, had the engagement announced that evening at the court dinner. Elizabeth wept throughout the meal. Louis XIV., it is said, made awkward attempts at consolation by passing her the choicest dishes. At the circle which followed, her son came up to kiss her hand. The memory of his broken promise was fresh in her mind. To the astonishment of the polished French court, she boxed the boy's ears soundly. An awful silence followed this impulsive piece of maternal discipline. The young duke, scarlet with mortification, stood abashed. His poor little pale bride-elect grew whiter than ever; Elizabeth, hardly making a reverence to the king, left the room. The people of Paris sided with the duchess. They threatened the life of Madame de Maintenon if the other proposed marriage, between Elizabeth's daughter and the Duke of Maine, was insisted upon. "I am very grateful to my friends, the Parisian mob," Elizabeth writes to her aunt.

From this time the breach between Elizabeth and her husband was complete. She was also estranged from her son. Her daughter was kept at a long distance from her amidst the most corrupt surroundings. Elizabeth became very lonely. The king, because of her opposition to the seizure of the Palatinate, now ignored her. Her husband seldom spoke to her. Her daughter was away but had been happily married. Her son, at this time, was very dissolute and avoided meeting her. She writes:

"Here in this great court I live, a hermit. Day after day I spend alone in my library. If visitors come I see them a few minutes, speak of the weather or the newspaper, then back again to my solitude."

In 1701 her husband died. By her aunt Sophie's sensible advice, reconciliation followed with the king and also with good-natured Madame de Maintenon. Her son, after one or two successful campaigns in Spain, returned to France loaded with honors. He turned again to his mother with the old affection of his boyhood. Much may be forgiven the Duke of Chartres because of his sincere, even if tardy, goodness to his mother. Her old age was made happy by him. To others he might seem a heartless, dissipated roué, to her he was the eighth wonder of the world—the strong, tender, manly son on whom she leaned. Her daughter, too, by frequent, loving letters brought her comfort.

The Duchess of Orléans died December 8, 1722. Beside her coffin her son, then Regent of France, clasped his sister in his arms and the two wept bitterly for their German mother.

Few women have been more loyal to their native country than Elizabeth of Orléans. A day or two before her death she said: "In everything I am now, what I have been all my life, wholly German. I despise those Germans who, from choice, speak and write habitually in a foreign tongue. Such sycophants are not worth a hair."

More fully than any other woman of her day, Elizabeth of Orléans represents the nobler side of German womanhood in a period of national debasement.

Chapter IX

Woman Held in Tightening Bonds

IX

WOMAN HELD IN TIGHTENING BONDS

VICE was the keynote of the first half of the eighteenth century in Europe. The moral miasma rising from that sink of iniquity, the late court of Louis XIV., and, infinitely more, that of Louis XV., enveloped Germany. Every little German court imagined itself a Versailles. Each German princeling esteemed himself a "Sun god." Mistresses were considered as necessary furnishings to every palace as tables or chairs. Augustus the Strong, of Saxony, is said to have been the father of three hundred and fifty-four illegitimate children. Vice spread through all ranks, often blighting the innocent no less than the guilty woman. Everywhere woman was man's toy. Faded, broken, ruined, she might be cast aside at his caprice. Without semblance of law, he might hold her captive, as in the case of the beautiful Baroness Cosel, a discarded mistress of Frederick Augustus of Saxony, who was kept in prison for fifty years by his majesty's command. Later, as we shall see, the wife of Prince George Louis of Hanover—afterward George I. of England—suffered a similar fate.

War continued. There were no long intervals of peace. Drunkenness, if possible, increased; certainly it did not decrease. Obscene practical jokes were constantly played.

Ordinary conversation was interlarded with indecent words and the most vulgar phrases. Society was rotten to the core.

In a dumb, sub-conscious sort of way, the coarse eighteenth century felt that its balance wheel was badly out of gear, and it attempted, though futilely, to remedy the lawlessness born of vice and war by hedging in each class, almost each individual, of the social order by a thousand petty ceremonials. The eighteenth century was the age of etiquette. Rank was cringingly worshipped. Titles became of paramount importance in the eyes of the middle classes. Börne satirizes this title worship:

"I divide the Germans into two classes—those who are *Aulic Councillors,* and those who would be so if they could. Were I a German prince, it would be quite otherwise. I would make all my subjects happy. I would make them all *Aulic Councillors,* without discrimination of rank, title, property, family, sex, or age. Then we should read in the *Frankfort Weekly Advertiser,*—'On the 13th inst. died Mr. Aulic Councillor Schinderhannis, after a few struggles, by hanging, in the thirty-sixth year of his active life. How powerfully this would inflame our patriotism.'"

Women received the full benefit of their husband's titles. Börne says:

"At a dinner we sat in this order. Myself, Mrs. Upper Criminal Councilloress, Mr. Finance Councillor, Mrs. Upper Paymistress, Mr. Court-theatre Director, Mrs. Privy-Legations Councilloress, Mr. State Councillor, Mrs. Salt-mines Inspectoress. I was placed, happily, between two lovely women. Mrs. Upper Criminal Councilloress was one of the mildest, sweetest creatures in the world and Mrs. Tax-Gatheress was very captivating. I fell in love with them both. As for my host and hostess, I could hardly look at them without bursting into tears

when I recollected that two such amiable persons were the only individuals present without titles."

In the general corruption of early eighteenth century society the single resource for a woman of fine feeling was to turn to God. Small wonder that, when Mysticism revived under the name of Quietism, it found thousands of followers among German women. During that shameful, or, rather, shameless, half century it would seem that the only pure men, the only happy families, left in Germany must be sought for in the ranks of the despised Quietists. Certainly, from no other class did woman, as woman, receive the slightest consideration or respect. Of the Quietists' attitude toward women, Freytag says:

"For the first time since the ancient days of Germany, with the exception of a short period of chivalrous devotion to the female sex, were German women elevated above the mere circle of family and household duties. For the first time did they take an active share, as members of a great society, in the highest interests of humankind. Gladly was it acknowledged by the theologians of the Pietists that there were more women than men in their congregations, and how anxiously and zealously they performed all the devotional exercises, like the women who remained by the cross when all the apostles had fled. Their inward life, their striving after the love of Christ and light from above, were watched with hearty sympathy, and they found trusty advisers and loving friends among refined and honorable men. The new conception of faith, which laid less stress on book-learning than on a pure heart, worked on women like a charm."

Jacob Spener was the great apostle of Quietism in Germany. He introduced and practised a refined mysticism that won him hosts of followers among women. Personal holiness was the constant theme of Spener's teaching.

Just as the marvellous subjective songs of Keats and Shelly were born of emotional Methodism in England, so, also, lyric poetry in Germany sprang from Quietism. The soul struggles of individual seekers after God ripened into a rich literary harvest by which the world will long continue to be nourished.

Two autobiographies of Quietists, by Johann Peterssen and his wife Johanna (born Von Merlau), are of extreme interest.

As in the case of all children in that militant age, Johanna's earliest recollections are of war. One day her mother was alone in the house except for her three little children—a girl of seven, a babe, and Johanna, aged four. Suddenly a regiment was heard marching down the road. The mother knew, only too well, what horror that might mean for herself and her little girls. Very hastily she knelt and prayed that they might be saved. Then she led her little ones to a tall field of corn near the house, bidding them lie down between the rows and to keep quite still. Suckling the babe, she, too, lay down in the corn. They were not discovered. When the last military straggler had passed, mother and children hurried to the nearest town for safety. As soon as they were well within the gates, Frau Merlau bade the children kneel down and thank God for their deliverance. The oldest girl objected to the delay. She wanted her supper. "What is the use of praying now?" she asked. "We are safe here." At that moment Johanna's religious experience began. She writes: "Then was I grieved to the heart at this ungrateful speech of my sister, that she would not thank God. I rebuked her for it."

From that day the little maid thought and dreamed almost wholly of spiritual mysteries. Soon after, believing that the midwife brought babies from heaven,

she sent by that functionary a greeting to Jesus. At the age of nine Johanna lost her good mother. Her father, a stern, saturnine man, hired a housekeeper, a captain's wife.

"But she was an unchristian woman and did not forget her soldier tricks," writes Johanna. For once when she saw some strange turkeys on the road she seized the best of them. To cook this stolen roast the housekeeper sent Johanna up into a high tower to throw down some loose dry boards. The child fell and lay stunned for a long time. When she regained consciousness and returned to the house she was well scolded for her clumsiness. Johanna refused to go to the table. "I sat apart," she writes, "because I would not eat any of the stolen fowl. It appeared to me truly disgraceful, though I was too timid to say so." It makes a pathetic little picture—this baby's martyrdom for conscience' sake.

At the age of twelve, soon after her confirmation, Johanna was sent as maid of waiting to the court of the Countess of Solms Roedelheim. The countess was partially insane. "She imagined I was a little dog and often beat me," Johanna writes. "Whenever we rode over the flooded meadows, she would push me out of the carriage, bidding me swim." Prayer was the lonely, unhappy child's only solace. The countess grew so violent that, at last, Johanna was transferred to the court of the Duchess of Holstein. She accompanied the stepdaughter of the duchess on her bridal journey to Austria, and, in spite of her ever nagging conscience, had an agreeable time.

"The drums and trumpets sounded beautiful on the water," says she; "only I could not help being worried to think I was going to a popish country. Whenever we stopped at an inn I sought a solitary place, fell on my

knees and prayed God to prevent my good fortune from working injury to my salvation."

The Duchess of Holstein loved Johanna like a daughter. Johanna laments her own fancied worldliness in girlhood: "I practised myself in all kinds of accomplishments, so that I excelled in these vanities. They were dear and pleasing to me. I had also a real liking for splendid dress because it became me well. People considered me Godly because I liked to read and pray and went to church and could always give a good account of the sermon. I even knew what had been preached upon the same text the preceding year. I was looked upon as a Godly maiden, but I was not really a true follower of Christ."

Nevertheless, Johanna was not worldly enough to suit the bridegroom—a gay young lieutenant-colonel—to whom her friends had affianced her. He broke the engagement because he complained, "though pretty and well-born, she is altogether too pious."

Johanna was glad to be free. She writes: "I always felt that among the nobility there were many evil habits that were quite contrary to Christ's teaching—lust, drinking, and many idle words for which an account must be given to God."

Upon a journey by a slow boat to the baths at Emser, a great thing happened in Johanna's life. Among the passengers, she noticed a studious looking man with a pleasant voice and refined manners. She writes:

"By God's special providence, he seated himself by me, and we fell into a spiritual discourse which lasted some hours, so that the four miles from Frankfort to Mainz seemed to me only a quarter of an hour's journey. We talked without ceasing, and it seemed just as if he read my heart. Then I gave vent to all concerning which I had hitherto lived in doubt. Indeed, I found in this new friend

what I had despaired of ever finding in any man in the world. Long had I looked around me to discover whether there really were in the world any true doers of God's word, and it had been a great stumbling block to me that I had found none. But when I perceived in this stranger such great penetration that he could see into the very recesses of my heart, also such humility, gentleness, holy love and earnestness to point the way of truth, I felt that I desired, above all things, to give myself wholly up to God." The man whom Johanna met on the boat was Jacob Spener. Johanna's conversion was complete. She withdrew from court gayeties, dressed simply, lived plainly. At first she was remonstrated with, then ridiculed unmercifully, and, finally, let alone.

Johanna's marriage with Johann Peterssen was most happy. Together they worked for God and for what they believed to be his cause—Quietism. Persecution, poverty, sorrows were theirs. But these crosses, though hard to bear, they believed to be God's revelation of Himself. An apocalyptic vision, too, they declared, had been vouchsafed them. Sustained by the unseen bread of faith, they lived to a great age, true to one another, to their fellowmen, and to God.

Very different is our next picture, taken from the court of Hanover. From the moment of her arrival, Elizabeth Stuart, Queen of Bohemia and Princess of the Palatinate, had felt herself at home in Germany. But her youngest daughter, though born in Germany, was never at home there. Sophie, Electress of Hanover, was thoroughly English. Mistress of five languages, she loved only English, and, from choice, would have spoken that alone. She knew more English history than the English ambassadors accredited to her husband's court. To gain, through her remote claim, the English throne either for herself or

her descendants, Sophie of Hanover all her life saved, and gathered, and schemed, and relentlessly crushed human obstacles. At the age of eighty, her old eyes gleaming, she said: "I could sink into the grave perfectly happy if I knew that the words 'Queen of Great Britain and Ireland' would be inscribed upon my tombstone." She died within sight of the promised land, only a few weeks before Anne Stuart.

An intellectual woman, an energetic woman, a virtuous woman,—using the word "virtue" in its narrower sense of chastity,—a wonderfully able woman, was Sophie of Hanover. An amiable woman, a lovable woman, a generous woman,—except occasionally for policy's sake,—she most certainly was not. But the hardness of her life should in some measure extenuate the hardness of her heart.

Sophie possessed a keen analytical intellect that saw, without the slightest tinge of emotion, clear down to the bottom of things. She passed an almost loveless childhood in a royal nursery far away from her mother, whom she never understood or cared for, and a sunless girlhood as governess in the household of her brother Carl Ludwig, to whom the Rhine Palatinate had been finally restored. Prince Carl and his wife lived a cat and dog life. Disgraceful scenes were continually occurring between them, sometimes even at the court table. The only member of the Palatine household in the least congenial to Sophie was her quick-witted niece Elizabeth Charlotte, afterward Duchess of Orléans.

Even bridal joys unalloyed were not to be poor, plain Sophie's. Duke George William of Hanover, to whom she had been affianced, refused her after seeing her, and, as if she were no more than a horse, foisted her upon his younger brother Ernest Augustus, at that time Bishop of

Osnabrueck, but later, through Sophie's clever scheming, Electoral Prince of Hanover.

Delving into the records of the court of Hanover, during the reign of Ernest Augustus and Sophie, is like working in a sewer; the worker is sickened by filth. A part of the time the electress escaped from the court's noxious atmosphere into the purer, higher, colder regions of philosophy. There was no courtier's flattery in the praise Leibnitz gave to Princess Sophie's intellectual ability.

But Sophie of Hanover by no means dwelt continuously on Alma's heights. Much of the time she was down among the sewer filth, contemptuous of it always, but using it, for lack of more durable material, as a temporary foundation for the steps which she meant should lead her and hers up to the English throne. If Sophie of Hanover had been a different kind of person,—a gentle, timid, pious woman, or a gay, pleasure-loving, lust-responding woman, the two characteristic types of her age,—Edward VII. would not be ruling in Great Britain to-day. Neither, for that matter, would the present German emperor, descended from the electress's daughter, the gifted Sophie Charlotte, be seated upon the throne of the Hohenzollerns.

The attitude of the Electress of Hanover to her unhappy daughter-in-law Sophie Dorothea was unfortunate for both women. Poor little Sophie Dorothea! In passing judgment upon her, the historians all seem to forget her extreme youth at the time of her marriage. Of this petted, spoiled, beautiful child of sixteen, even Thackeray says: "She was a bad wife;" and he sneers at her even while he is relating facts that should go far to justify her in any missteps she may have made in trying to escape from a boorish husband whom she found odiously cruel and selfish. The girl lived in hell; and she sought, through passionate, disinterested love, to gain what to her seemed heaven.

Sophie Dorothea was half French. Her mother, Eleanor d'Olbreuze, one of the very few pure women connected with the court of Hanover in the eighteenth century, was a Frenchwoman of good family. Eleanor d'Olbreuze was legally married to Duke George William of Celle, elder brother of Ernest Augustus of Hanover, although the Electress Sophie did all in her power to prevent the marriage of her former fiancé with the beautiful Frenchwoman. Sophie Dorothea was a brunette of the most perfect type, with vivid color and a charming rosebud mouth. Her neck, bust, and arms were beautiful. By nature she was happy, lively, witty, and affectionate.

On the morning of her sixteenth birthday, Sophie Dorothea awoke in her pretty yellow and white chamber with the pleasant consciousness of a happy day before her. Her betrothal to a neighboring young noble of the house of Wolfenbüttel was to be celebrated. The girl was not wildly in love with the youth accepted by her parents. But she was satisfied. She had known him all her life, and she liked him well enough, in neighborly, frank, girlish fashion.

It was somewhat late, for Sophie Dorothea was rather an indolent little princess. As she lay there dreaming, with her beautiful dark eyes wide open, her mother, pale and agitated, entered the chamber. The Duchess of Celle hurriedly informed her daughter that there had been a complete change of plans. Early that morning, after travelling all night in her haste, the Electress Sophie had arrived at the castle. It was the wish of the reigning house, the electress said, that Sophie Dorothea should marry her cousin, George Louis of Hanover, son of the Elector Ernest Augustus and his wife, Sophie. The proposed marriage with the Prince of Wolfenbüttel had therefore been hurriedly abandoned.

Now Sophie Dorothea knew her cousin George well. She hated and despised him. Fastidious to a degree, she called her cousin a lout, and declared amid a storm of tears and sobs that she would never marry him. Duke George William was called in to persuade or command his daughter. He came, bringing with him as a gift from the Duchess of Hanover a picture of George Louis set in diamonds. Sophie Dorothea did not receive this love token prettily. She threw it against the opposite wall with such force that the miniature was hopelessly smashed, and the precious stones were scattered on the floor.

But Sophie of Hanover gained her point, as she did always. The marriage was consummated, and the immense fortune of Sophie Dorothea was tightly secured to the reigning electoral house of Hanover. Sophie of Hanover never made a pecuniary mistake. In the present instance the wily electress figured so closely that little Sophie Dorothea was practically left without a penny.

The pretty, lively young bride found the court life of Hanover, with its interminable rules of etiquette, stupid and tiresome. Of her bridegroom even his mother said: "Sophie Dorothea will find her match in him. A more obstinate, pigheaded boy than my son George never lived. If he has any brains at all they are surrounded by such a thick crust that nobody has ever been able to discover what is in them." He did not want to marry this girl, but was tempted by her ten thousand pounds a year.

Two children, a boy and a girl, were born to George Louis and Sophie Dorothea. The electress superintended the babies and interfered at every turn to thwart her daughter-in-law's wishes concerning them. The prince was harsh, cold, and sullen toward his young wife. The elector was always kind, but Sophie Dorothea found his conversation wearisome and his gallantry distasteful.

The beautiful little princess was very homesick. Nobody cared. She was unutterably lonely. Nobody cared. She was very dull. Nobody tried to entertain her. Then Koenigsmark came. Koenigsmark, the dashing, Koenigsmark, the handsome, with whom she had played in childhood when he was a page in her father's palace. Koenigsmark cared. Koenigsmark loved her. In some respects, Koenigsmark may have been the villain some historians have painted him, but he was genuinely in love with his old playmate, now the neglected, unhappy wife of Prince George Louis of Hanover.

Into this, her first real love experience, Sophie Dorothea threw herself, body and soul. She writes to Koenigsmark:

"I belong so truly to you that death alone can part us. No one ever loved so strongly as I love you. Why am I so far from you? What joy to be with you, to prove by my caresses how I love and worship you! If my blood were needed to ransom you from danger I would give it gladly. I cannot exist without seeing you. I lead a lingering life. I think of our joy when we were together and then of my weariness to-day. Ah, my darling, why am I not with you in battle? I would gladly die by your side. Once more, good-bye. I belong to you a thousand times more than to myself." The woman who wrote these passionate words was a mother. In name, at least, though less well treated than her husband's mistresses, she was a wife. But she was also a starving woman, hungering and thirsting for expressed affection.

Koenigsmark and Sophie Dorothea planned an elopement. Discovery followed. Koenigsmark was secretly murdered by agents of old Countess Platen, one of the Elector Augustus's mistresses. Sophie Dorothea was consigned to the dreary castle of Ahlden a prisoner for life, and there she lived almost half a century. There, while

her husband sat on the English throne, she ate her heart out, slowly. Her son grew up and became, after her death, George II. of England. Her daughter married the Crown Prince of Prussia and became the mother of Frederick the Great and of Wilhelmine, Princess of Baireuth.

Sophie Dorothea was constantly making plans to escape. But all such plans proved futile, for she was surrounded by spies. Her one true friend through life, her mother, died. Soon after, an official in whom she had placed implicit confidence betrayed her almost accomplished plan to escape and live quietly in a distant country. This last blow shattered her mind. She wrote one last, madly cursing letter to King George challenging him to meet her before a twelvemonth and a day at the judgment bar of God. A few days later she died of brain fever. A soothsayer had once told King George that he would not outlive his divorced wife a year. Therefore, the superstitious king did his utmost to keep the captive in good health. Physicians were ordered to visit her frequently, and she was permitted daily exercise, both riding and walking, in the open air.

Soon after Sophie Dorothea's death, King George's health began to fail. He started for his beloved Hanover. Just outside Osnabrück a folded paper was thrown into the royal carriage. It was Sophie Dorothea's last maledictory letter. After reading it the king fell down in a fit from the effects of which he died.

As every human emotion of love in princely marriage was crushed out by reasons of state policy, so religion was subjected entirely to expediency. When the Electress of Hanover was asked concerning her daughter, Sophie Charlotte: "Of what religion is the princess?" she replied: "The princess is of no religion, as yet. We are waiting to see what faith the man whom she marries

may prefer her to profess." When it was decided that the Prince of Brandenburg should marry her it was found by the politicians that the princess "of no religion at all" suited him exactly. Sophie Charlotte remained true to her early training, or rather to her lack of training. She was a vigorous freethinker to the end of her days. She was much more worthy the name of philosopher than her mother. "She insists, always," wrote Leibnitz, her lifelong friend and admirer, "in knowing the Why of the Why." At Berlin, Sophie Charlotte held a genuinely intellectual court. She gathered around her the foremost scholars of the day. Where scholarship was concerned, the first Queen of Prussia ignored race, creed, and even social station. She cordially welcomed to the circle of her friendship any man or woman with brains. The queen had inherited the grace and tact of her grandmother, Elizabeth Stuart. She was immensely popular. Sophie Charlotte possessed an ever ready sense of humor. She dearly loved to set an infidel and a court chaplain arguing against each other. She delighted in doing things incongruous to the occasion. At her husband's magnificent coronation, during the most solemn and impressive moment, she calmly took a pinch of snuff, thereby drawing down on her careless head the displeasure of her royal consort. Up to the hour of her death, Sophie Charlotte jested. When dying she is said to have declined religious consolation on the very true ground that she knew exactly what the parson would say, and it was, therefore, not worth while to trouble him. "My funeral will give the king a grand opportunity to enjoy a magnificent display," she whispered. It did. Splendor-loving Frederick buried his wife with the utmost pomp.

Sophie Charlotte left a son, afterward Frederick William I. of Prussia, who married unfortunate Sophie

Dorothea's daughter, also named, for her mother; Sophie Dorothea. The world knows well through Carlyle and, also, though one-sidedly, through the memoirs of Wilhelmine, sister of Frederick the Great, the story of this union.

This second Sophie Dorothea was not a happy woman. The fate of her imprisoned mother weighed heavily upon her. Secretly, she corresponded with her mother, and did her best to set her free. Again, as in the case of the Electress of Hanover, England furnished the life ambition of a German princess. Sophie Dorothea ardently wished to effect a double marriage between her two children, Frederick and Wilhelmine, and the son and daughter of George II., then crown prince of England. Disappointment at the failure of this project, embittered and shortened her life.

The tall grenadiers, the royal cane and the parsimony of Frederick William and their effect upon his thoroughly subjugated family are well-known. The intense brotherly and sisterly love that existed between Frederick and Wilhelmine was cemented, verily, by a bond of affliction. Hunger and blows were often the portion of these sensitive royal children. Wilhelmine writes of their "summer vacation":

"We had a most sad life then. We were awakened at seven every morning by the King's regiment, which exercised in front of the windows of our rooms on the ground floor. The firing went on incessantly, piff, puff, and lasted the whole morning. At ten we went to see our mother and accompanied her into the room next the King's, where we sat and sighed all the forenoon. Then came dinner time. The dinner consisted of six small, badly cooked dishes, which had to suffice for twenty-four persons, so that some had to be satisfied with the mere smell. At table nothing else was talked of but economy and soldiers. The Queen and ourselves, too unworthy to open our mouths, listened in humble silence

to the oracles which were pronounced. After dinner the King slept in his armchair for two hours, and we had to keep as still as mice until he awoke. Then we read with the Queen. When, at last, the King went to his tobacco parliament we were free for a little while."

That Frederick and his sister grew up, under this repressive system, into nothing worse than a pair of neurasthenics seems almost a miracle.

During the eighteenth century there were two distinct types of history-making men in Germany—the Frenchified-German, fond of pageants and rich raiment, and the rugged, harsh, yet true-hearted, fighting men of the Dessauer stamp.

The Prince of Anhalt-Dessau was the field-marshal of Frederick William I. To Dessau the science of warfare owes an enormous debt. When a young man, this impetuous prince fell in love with the daughter of an apothecary named Fos. In spite of all obstacles of birth and wealth, he determined to marry the girl of his choice; and because he was, says Carlyle, "perhaps the biggest mass of inarticulate human vitality, certainly, one of the biggest then going about in the world, marry her he did. In spite of Dessauer's being, to quote Carlyle again, "a very whirlwind of a man," the marriage was most happy.

During the first half of the eighteenth century French practically superseded German as the language of polite society. The virile German language largely owes its rehabilitation to a woman, Luise Gottsched, wife of Johann Christopher Gottsched, the famous scholar. As usual, fame has been unjust: the husband has received all the credit, while the wife did all, or nearly all, of the work. Luise Gottsched was one of the brightest women of the eighteenth century. She wrote exceedingly well. But after her husband began his *Dictionary of the German*

Language and his *Model Grammar,* Luise was obliged to do what a clever woman whose husband writes a dictionary is always obliged to do,—drop all her own literary work to assist him. Morning, noon, and night, year in and year out, Luise Gottsched toiled at this verbal drudgery; and when she was sick,—worn out at the age of forty-seven,—her husband whined, publicly, because she did not always "answer pleasantly" when he called her from her invalid's couch to copy his interminable manuscripts. She died at the age of fifty-nine. One happy time, though, Luise Gottsched had before she died. She saw Maria Theresa at Vienna. If the following extracts seem somewhat servile, it must be remembered that the letter was written in an age in which royalty worship was a part of life. In fact, Luise Gottsched's delighted description is mainly valuable as a true reflection of the popular feeling about royalty in the eighteenth century. The glimpse it gives of that noble woman, Maria Theresa (1740–1780), is also interesting. The good empress's simple, friendly reception of the husband and wife, her divination of what this visit to Vienna meant in their narrow lives, her kindly desire that they should see all there was to see of interest—these things are charmingly illuminative. They make one understand the enthusiastic shout of her Hungarian subjects: "We will die for our King, Maria Theresa."

This is what Luise Gottsched wrote:

"To Fräulein Thomasius, of Troschenreuth and Widersberg, at Nürnberg.

"VIENNA, September 28, 1749.

"MY ANGEL:

"First, embrace me. I believe all good things should be shared with one's friends. Hence must I tell you that never, in all my life, have I had such cause to be joyfully proud as on this day. You will guess at once, I know,

that I have seen the Empress. Yes, I have seen her, the greatest among women. She who, in herself, is higher than her throne. I have not only seen her, but I have spoken with her. Not merely seen her, but talked with her three-quarters of an hour in her family circle. Forgive me if this letter is chaotic and my handwriting uneven. Both faults spring from the overwhelming joy I feel in the two delights of this day—the privilege of meeting the Empress and the pleasure of telling your Highness of the honor.

"This morning at ten we went to the palace. We took our places where Baron Esterhazy, who procured us admission, told us to stand. He supposed, as we did, that we, with the hundreds of others who were waiting, might be permitted to see her Majesty as she passed through the apartment on her way to the Royal chapel. After half an hour we had the happiness of seeing the three Princesses go by. They asked the Court-mistress who we were. Then, on being told our names, they turned and extended their hands for us to kiss. The eldest Princess is about ten years old. As I kissed her hand, she paid me a compliment. She said she had often heard me highly spoken of. I was pleased, of course, and very grateful for her remarkable condescension. Forgive me if this sounds proud. Worse is to follow. I cannot tell of the incredible favor of these exalted personages without seeming to be vain. But you well know that I am not vain.

"About eleven o'clock, a man-servant, dressed in gorgeous livery, came and told us to follow him. He led us through a great many frescoed corridors and splendid rooms into a small apartment which was made even smaller by a Spanish screen placed across it. We were told to wait there. In a few moments, the Mistress of Ceremonies came. She was very gracious to us. In a little while, her Majesty entered followed by the three Princesses.

My husband and myself each sank upon the left knee and kissed the noblest, the most beautiful hand that has ever wielded a sceptre. The Empress gently bade us rise. Her face and her gracious manner banished all the timidity and embarrassment we naturally felt in the presence of so exalted and beautiful a figure as hers. Our fear was changed to love and confidence. Her Majesty told my husband that she was afraid to speak German before the Master of that language. 'Our Austrian dialect is very bad, they say,' she added.

"To which my man answered that, fourteen years before, when he listened to her address at the opening of the Landtag, he had been struck by the beauty and purity of her German. She spoke, on that occasion, he said, like a goddess.

"Then the Empress laughed merrily, saying, ''Tis lucky I was not aware of your presence or I should have been so frightened that I should have stopped short in my speech.' She asked me how it happened that I became so learned a woman. I replied, 'I wished to become worthy of the honor that has this day befallen me in meeting your Majesty. This will forever be a red-letter day in my life.'

"Her Majesty said, 'You are too modest. I well know that the most learned woman in Germany stands before me.' My answer to that was, 'According to my opinion, the most learned woman, not of Germany only, but of all Europe, stands before me as Empress.'

"Her Majesty shook her head. 'Ah, no,' she said, 'my familiar acquaintance with that woman forces me to say you are mistaken.'"

Maria Theresa's husband joined the group and chatted most affably. Some of the younger children were called in and properly reverenced. Then the empress asked the

visitors if they would like to see her remaining babies, upstairs. Of course, the Gottscheds were enchanted at the thought. Following the mistress of ceremonies, they went upstairs "to the three little angels there," whom they found in the not exactly celestial act of "eating their breakfast under the care of the Countess Sarrau."

After kissing "the little, highborn hands," the happy visitors were conducted through the private rooms of the palace, "an honor," Frau Gottsched writes, ecstatically, "not vouchsafed to one stranger out of a thousand." Not the least pleasant part of the whole visit naturally was the return to the waiting room, now full, where all "congratulated them upon the unusual honor shown them."

Luise begs her friend, a bit insincerely perhaps, to "burn this letter and tell no one of its contents lest people may accuse us, hereafter, of being proud."

In the eighteenth century the peasants of Germany were fairly well off. Some of the most cruel political disabilities of the peasant class had been removed. Agriculture, in consequence, had made great strides. In the towns the condition of the workingwomen was about the same as in the seventeenth century. To escape man's lust was still the main problem of any virtuous working girl who was unfortunate enough to possess a pretty face.

The chief diversion of rich and poor, alike, was the theatre. Acting was the first profession, except teaching, opened to German women. Dramatic art in Germany, when about to expire from sheer vulgarity, was saved by a woman. She died a martyr to the cause of purity in art.

Frederica Caroline Weissenborn was born in Reichenbach. Her father, a physician, was a man of Calvinistic sternness. Caroline had a lover, Johann Neuber, an actor. Her father, learning of his daughter's infatuation,

determined to "whip it out of her." In those days all fathers whipped their grown-up daughters, and their wives too, if they felt like it. But Caroline did not propose to be whipped. She jumped from a two-story window and, with no bones broken, landed in a hedge. Young Neuber, the actor, seems to have been strolling near the hedge that day, for he appeared promptly upon the scene and took Caroline to a neighboring town, where they were speedily married. Fate led the couple to Leipzig. Both Neuber and his wife played there. They became friends with the Gottscheds. Gottsched was deeply interested in the restoration of the German drama. Caroline Neuber was the one woman in the world to carry out, to improve and broaden, the pedant's plans. Upon Luise Gottsched, of course, fell the immense labor of translation and arrangement. The three worked enthusiastically. Neuber kept the accounts and did the marketing.

But the heart and soul of the new movement to improve the German stage was Caroline Neuber, keen-sighted, energetic, sympathetic. Caroline Neuber organized a theatrical troupe upon moral lines hitherto unknown in the history of the stage. All unmarried actresses of the troupe lived with her. She watched their conduct closely and insisted upon decorum. The unmarried actors of the company were obliged to dine at her table. No tavern temptations were to be put in their way. Madame Neuber began by presenting only classic tragedies, but public demand forced her to alternate tragedy with farce. From Hamburg she wrote: "Our tragedies and comedies are fairly well attended. The trouble we have taken to improve taste has not been thrown away. I find here various converted hearts. Persons whom I have least expected to do so have become lovers of poetry, and there are many who appreciate our orderly, artistic plays."

Of Caroline Neuber, Lessing says: "One must be very prejudiced not to allow to this famous actress a thorough knowledge of her art. She had masculine penetration, and in one point only did she betray her sex. She delighted in stage trifles. All plays of her arrangement are full of disguises and pageants, wondrous and glittering. But, after all, Neuber may have known the hearts of the Leipzig burghers, and put these settings in to please them, as flies are caught with treacle."

For a while, Madame Neuber scored a brilliant success in Saxony. Then the public, following a corrupt court, grew tired of classical poetry and virtue on the stage, and clamored for its old diet of buffoonery and immorality. Neuber refused to lower the standard of her plays. In 1733 her contract with the court theatre expired, and the king refused to renew it. He placed a Merry Andrew at the head of the court theatre. In Hamburg and Saint Petersburg, Madame Neuber received similar treatment. But this true artist would not give up her fight for a pure stage. She wrote:

"We could earn a great deal of money if we would play only the tasteless, the obscene, the cheap blood-curdling or the silly, fashionable plays. But we have undertaken what is good. We will not forsake the path as long as we have a penny. Good must continue good."

Caroline Neuber and her husband were growing old. They were bitterly poor. They played subordinate, but never immoral, parts now in any troupe that would take them. They had broken with Gottsched, whose wife was dead. One good friend, Dr. Loeber, remained, however. Dr. Loeber gave the old couple a room, rent free, in Dresden. In the war of 1756, Prussian soldiers, quartered in Dresden, slept in the same room with the Neubers. But the soldiers treated the aged actress with the greatest

respect. Not an indecent word was ever uttered by them in her presence. Not a pipe was ever laid upon her poor little writing table. When her husband died in that overcrowded attic, Prussian soldiers bore him, tenderly and reverently, to his grave.

In 1760 the city was bombarded. A shell crashed through the roof of the room where old Madame Neuber lay ill. Dr. Loeber carried her for safety to a suburban village. But the owner of the house to which she was taken, when he found out who she was, refused to let an actress die under his roof; so she was moved again, this time to a room in a cottage nearby. From her bed she could see the vine-covered slopes of Pillnitz. Dying, she folded her withered hands, and murmured: "I will lift up mine eyes to the hills, from whence cometh my help."

Her final exit from the troubled stage of earth was accomplished with difficulty. The village pastor, determined that no actress should be buried in the consecrated ground over which he held sway, locked the churchyard gates and refused to yield up the key. Madame Neuber's coffin was therefore hoisted over the wall and lowered into the grave by two or three old friends. No prayer was spoken; no hymn was sung. But Caroline Neuber's influence for good lives. She performed two great services: she purified the German drama, and she introduced Lessing to the world.

In every time and clime, belles have danced and flirted and laughed and chatted and been happy. Madame Johanna Schopenhauer, the famous mother of her more famous philosopher son, Arthur, has left a pleasing description of fashion's whimseys in the eighteenth century:

"We had no thin ball dresses, for the simple reason that thin varieties of woven material had not then been invented. And yet we danced in our cumbrous company

gowns made of heavy silk—we were passionately fond of dancing. We were courted, admired, nay, even as much admired as our granddaughters are now in their cloudlike, treacherously diaphanous garments. How it happened, in our hideous disguises, I cannot, at this distance of time, pretend to explain. How well I remember my first ball!

"At least an ell was added to my stature by a monstrous tower of hair which was built up on a wire and horsehair frame, and which was crowned with flowers, feathers, and ribbons. The high heels of my white ball slippers, which were adorned with golden ties, contributed to counterbalance the disproportion in my little person at the other extremity. Though my shoes fell far short of the preposterous height of my hair, they raised my heels so far from the ground as to pitch me on the tips of my toes. A pair of stays with whalebones close together, of a thickness sufficient to turn a musket ball, forced back the arms and shoulders and threw the chest forward. Down toward the hips the corset was laced so tightly as to make one's figure resemble that of a wasp. These stays restricted all freedom of motion. They had only one sensible thing about them, and that was a rather stout iron which kept them from pressing on the breast.

"And now, the hooped petticoat over which was worn a silk skirt with flounces and all kinds of indescribable trimmings up to the knees. Over this was worn a robe of the same material, with a long train. In front this robe was open, sloping on each side from the waist. The sides of the robe were ornamented with the same kind of trimming as adorned the skirt. The neck and bosom were considerably exposed. The whole was completed with an immense bouquet of artificial flowers. The sleeves reached only to the elbows, and were richly trimmed with blond lace and ribbons to the shoulders.

"This, however, was the dress of young ladies only. Our mothers were splendid in stiff brocades and ruffles of blond or point lace. Long sleeves were not worn at all, even for everyday dresses, summer or winter. Hardened by habit, we did not suffer more than we do now. Our mothers dressed much more richly than we did. They were heavily loaded with jewels.

"The fashions were obtained from Paris, but only when they had become rather obsolete there. Though disfigured by exaggeration, they were eagerly sought after. One exception only was made, in our part of the country at least: the French habit of using rouge was not adopted. The few ladies who dared be so heterodox as to paint themselves did it with fear and trembling and with the greatest secrecy, for they ran the risk of being publicly reprimanded from the pulpit. Our Lutheran shepherd was very strict with his flock.

"Another fashion, however, found universal favor with our elegant ladies. A fashion so senseless that I should, certainly, have doubted its existence if I had not, as a child, often played with my mother's mother-of-pearl box of patches. All ladies wore patches, and my mother always kept her box handy, its lid being provided with a small looking-glass, so that if a patch fell off she might at once replace it with another. These little ornaments, made of English court-plaster, were cut in the shape of full, half and crescent moons, stars, hearts, etc., and were stuck on the face with much forethought and ingenuity to heighten the charms of the wearer, and to add a graceful expression to the countenance. A row of tiny moons, gradually increasing in size from the crescent to the full, at the outer corner of the eye, was supposed to make that organ look larger, and to heighten its brightness. A couple of small stars at the corner of the mouth was thought to

impart an enchantingly roguish expression to it. A patch on the cheek was thought to bring out a dimple to advantage. There were, besides, patches of larger size—doves, cupids, suns, and others known by the general name of 'assassins,' probably because of their killing effect on masculine hearts."

In the last analysis, the position of woman in any given period depends upon the currently accepted philosophy underlying that period. The philosophy of the seventeenth century—that of Descartes and Leibnitz—may be condensed in one word—mechanism. Woman, with her emotional nature, her wayward, irregular fancies, her insistence upon personal love instead of rigid law, her lack of logic, and her perplexing, often keenly puncturing intuitions, had no place in the well-arranged system of Descartes and Leibnitz. It was even questioned, satirically in France, but seriously in Germany, whether or not woman was a human being. If not, said the learned divines who argued the question in their pulpits, she could not be eligible to salvation. The conclusion, not unanimous, however, finally reached was that women ought to be looked upon as human beings,—lower, of course, than man, but a grade or two higher than the beasts of the field.

Of seventeenth century philosophers, Spinoza, "the God-intoxicated man," alone met any of the conscious higher needs of woman. Hence, women, by thousands, accepted the philosophy of Spinoza under the name of Quietism.

Seventeenth century philosophy made woman nothing. Eighteenth century philosophy, springing from the English utilitarians, Hobbes, Locke, and Hume, made woman a mere adjunct, a tool of man. Above all things else, an Englishman loves his home. A good wife makes a man more comfortable in his home than a bad one. "Therefore,"

said eighteenth century philosophy, "'tis the part of worldly prudence to train women toward virtue." This thought is the substance of Locke's *Treatise on Education*, so far as it concerns women. "A husband of high social standing may be the reward of persistent virtue," added Samuel Richardson, the man through whom Locke's philosophy became potent over women of all ranks in all civilized countries.

For more than half a century Locke's philosophy, filtered through Richardson's novels, colored feminine ideals almost as deeply on the continent as in the author's own country. Rousseau was a third link in the chain—a very strong, a mighty link.

Richardson's first novel was *Pamela, or Virtue Rewarded*. *Clarissa Harlowe* and *Sir Charles Grandison* soon followed. Each of these books, translated into German, passed through many editions. French renderings of Richardson's novels also flooded German book stores. This author's books struck both new and old chords in the heart of German womanhood. They dealt with heroines who moved in the humbler walks of life. Before Richardson and Rousseau wrote, the memoirs of highborn dames may be searched in vain for a single expression of sisterly feeling toward women in a lower rank of society than their own. Compassion and almsgiving were not lacking, but the "put yourself in her place" feeling seems never previously to have been awakened. Richardson emphasized chastity—a virtue which the early eighteenth century world most sadly lacked. He made the hearthstone once more an altar.

Out of the sentimentalism of the Locke-Richardson-Rousseau school was evolved a type of womanhood which, during the second half of the eighteenth century, made the world purer and better.

Chapter X

Through Storm and Stress to Classicism and Humanism

X

THROUGH STORM AND STRESS TO CLASSICISM AND HUMANISM

ABOUT the middle of the eighteenth century, after long and weary years of unfruitful struggle, disappointment and desolation, there begins faintly to glimmer, and then rapidly to shine in broad illumination, a stupendous cultural movement the impelling force of which was the humanizing thought which sprang from the fertile brains of great literary and philosophical thinkers; preëminent among whom were Lessing, the greatest critical genius of the German nation, and Kant, Germany's greatest philosopher. Enlightenment—mental liberation from the shackles of tradition and orthodoxy—became the watchword of the time. Through the dominating personality of Frederick the Great (1740–1786), even despotism was made to feel this influence, the scope of which was still further extended, though less successfully, by the reforms of Joseph II. (1765–1790), Maria Theresa's son. The message sounded from beyond the seas in the American Declaration of Independence, and the Constitution spread through the hearts of the nations of Europe, proclaiming the gospel of human rights and equality before God and the law. The French Revolution was its most direct fruit. In Germany, the liberation of thought, of science and art, the emancipation of man and woman

alike, had to precede political freedom which, in its full development, could be evolved only by blood and iron.

It is true, however, that, though the idea of humanism then became the ideal of the present, there remained enough of the social and political vices and errors of the past to make this epoch perhaps the most complex and complicated in German history. Divine thought and mystic-sentimental-pseudo-science, the grossest lust and the highest idealism, the most abject servility and the most liberal political views, cynical scepticism and childlike faith, true patriotism and nationalism on the one hand, national treason and anti-national cosmopolitanism on the other, meet and conflict at every step.

But whatever were the conditions of the time, woman was the *causa movens,* the underlying force of the cultural life of the nation and of all its leaders. Women contributed to the progress of the storm and stress evolution toward classicism and emancipation; women inspired the bloom of literature; women gave Germany a stage and adorned it with their genius as actresses; women fostered the arts; women on the throne ruled Germany; a German woman, withal the greatest and vilest, Katharine the Great, raised Russia to the rank of a world power; women dominated the nobility and the courts; women elevated the *bourgeoisie* to higher standards of living and thinking; women strove to emancipate themselves and their peasant husbands from servitude.

The movements of the women of the burgher classes were much more restricted than are those of the women of to-day. They might not walk abroad, or visit theatres, concerts, or public places, without their natural male companions; their chambermaids accompanied them even to church and to stores. Their natural field of activity, their world, was the house. The reading of novels was held in

low esteem. Book learning was of a rather elementary kind, but there was plenty of good sense and home happiness, and sensible rearing of large families. It is a painful fact that from Bavaria, a country which was under the fullest sway of the Church, quite different testimony comes to us. We may realize, however, from the base tone of characteristic sermons, communicated to us in Nicolai's works, how low must have been the standard of the clergy of that time. The author and traveller Risbeck describes the degradation of the burgher classes in Bavaria, "where all vie in drinking and immorality, where next to every church stands a tavern and a base house. There a priest touches a fair maiden's bosom, which is half-covered with a 'scapulier.' There one inquires whether you are of her religion, for she will have nothing to do with a heretic. Another discusses during her debauch her spiritual sodalities, her pilgrimages and absolutions, etc., etc."

Owing to their gradual enfranchisement by Frederick the Great and Joseph II., the peasantry had mightily progressed from the brutal feudal oppression. The French Revolution also had some beneficent results for the German peasantry. After the terrible downfall of Prussia and Austria because of Napoleon's onslaughts, a great step forward was taken through the reforms of the statesman Stein, and the Revolution of 1848 accomplished the rest. Therewith the elevation of the women of the peasantry went hand in hand. The many and varied popular festivals of the German peasantry, with their peculiar customs and gaieties, reveal the fact that there was no lack of those harmless social pleasures which are the delight of woman, inasmuch as they give scope to characteristics peculiarly feminine. The festivals of singers, riflemen, and gymnasts, which were then—and are to-day—observed in

nearly every little German town and village, also contributed to the enrichment of the life of the lower classes.

The chapter of wealth and poverty, of overwork and enforced idleness, belongs but incidentally to our theme, in so far as it affects the life and morality of German womanhood. While the record is, on the whole, favorable for the time, yet we cannot conceal the fact that with the pauperism of certain sections of Germany, due to wars, drought, princely maladministration, and unjust taxation, the female vices and crimes which are instigated by poverty attained terrible proportions. The great romantic authoress Bettina von Arnim has given us painful insight into the lives of the poor women in the "family-houses" of Berlin,—a sad anticipation of our tenement houses. The female youth of the God-forsaken proletariat then, as to-day, fell almost irretrievable victims to the blasting, soul-consuming vice of prostitution. The numberless examples of the brave, courageous, noble self-sacrifice of hundreds of thousands of pure women of the poorest classes, who through overwork staggered into an early grave, are not statistically reported; but the statistics of prostitution of German cities, which are conscientiously recorded, reveal a terrible state of affairs,—not worse than that of other great civilized nations, yet painful enough for the historian of culture.

But let us return to the shadow of the thrones of the second half of the eighteenth century. Under Maria Theresa's father, Charles VI. (1711–1740), the last Habsburger, French morals had been domesticated in Vienna. The monarch officially kept a mistress, *maîtresse en titre*. Lady Montague, a distinguished British peeress, reported that "every lady of rank in Vienna had two men, one who gave her his name, the other, who fulfilled the duties of the husband." These alliances were so general that it

would have been a grievous offence not to invite the two men with the lady to a feast. It is true that with Maria Theresa's ascent to the throne a different morality was forced upon the unwilling court circles. The empress was virtuous and religious in the extreme, an admirable wife and mother, and maintained toward vice an unrelenting attitude.

The political greatness of Empress Maria Theresa does not belong to our theme. To characterize her, however, in a nutshell, we cannot forgo quoting her famous note to Prime Minister Kaunitz, with which she accompanied the treaty of the first partition of Poland in 1772: "When all my States were assailed and I did not know where to bear my child, I insisted upon my right and the help of God. But in this affair, in which not only manifest justice cries to heaven against us, but also right and common reason is against us, I must confess that I have never in my life felt such an anguish and such a shame to allow myself to be seen. Consider, Prince, what an example we give to all the world when, for a miserable piece of Poland or of Moldavia and Wallachia, we throw to the dogs our honor and reputation! I notice well that I stand alone and am no longer *en vigueur,* therefore I let things take their course, though not without my greatest grief."

The moral example of Maria Theresa did not, however, in any great degree affect her gallant husband, Francis of Lorraine. His mistress, Princess Auersperg-Neipperg, had all the noble vices of her exalted position. The prime minister, Kaunitz, was utterly immoral, and even dared to take with him in his equipage his mistresses, who waited till his audience with the empress was over. When the latter once ventured to remonstrate with him, he replied: "Madam, I have come here to speak with you about your affairs, not about my own." The so-called chastity

commission established by the empress to supervise the morals of Vienna succeeded in compelling those who persistently indulged in vices at least to exercise more caution and discretion; for she remained inexorable against scandalous debauch and inflicted ignominious chastisement upon the offenders, according to the Draconic code of the time. The result was that Vienna had its "Messalinas in toned down colors," as the British traveller Wraxall says, and that "the superstition of Austrian women, though it be traditional and immense, is by no means an obstacle to excesses; they sin, pray, confess, and begin anew."

The brilliant court at Vienna found its counterpart in the frugal, economical bourgeois court of Berlin, while that of Dresden, as mentioned in the foregoing chapters, was sunk in a mire of moral corruption. The memoirs of Marquise Sophie Wilhelmine of Baireuth, sister of Frederick the Great, describe, with humor and sometimes with ingenuous malice, the condition of the court at Dresden. The wife and children of the coarse soldier-king were treated with great harshness and almost deprived of the necessities of life. The marquise tells of a visit to Dresden in 1738, where Frederick fell in love with Countess Orzelska, a natural daughter and mistress of August the Strong. The pen refuses to record the history of the incest practised at that court with and among the three hundred and fifty-four "natural" children of August. August was jealous of the Crown Prince of Prussia, and therefore substituted for Countess Orzelska the beautiful Italian Formera, who became Frederick's first mistress. Later, however, at the return visit of the Saxon court to Berlin, as Scherr reports, Frederick again met the Countess Orzelska, a meeting which did not remain without consequences. Other details of the court life of the time cannot be put on paper: we must refer the reader to

Scherr's discussion of *Eighteenth Century Court Society,* to Lessing's *Emilia Galotti,* in which in Italian disguise the great classicist chastises German princely rape, and to Schiller's drama, *Cabal and Love,* which proves that, unfortunately, the victims of princely lust were not always the willing courtesans; but frequently victims chosen from the people.

The court of Berlin is said by some to have assumed a higher standard of morality when Frederick ascended the throne. His consort, Princess Elizabeth of Brunswick, though a noble and pure woman, had never won his love, for he had been forced into the marriage by his father; she did not reside with her royal husband, whose life was now filled with his world-stirring military and political deeds and, for recreation, with music, history, and philosophy. On the other hand, from the report of the British ambassador, Lord Malmesbury (1772), it seems that the great king had not succeeded in raising the standard of morality among the inhabitants of his residence, as the ambassador, perhaps owing to splenetic exaggeration, writes that "there is in that capital neither an honest man nor a chaste woman. An absolute moral corruption prevails among both sexes of all classes, to which must be added a general impoverishment due to the fiscal oppressions of the actual king, Frederick the Great, and their love of luxury since the times of the king's grandfather. The men are constantly occupied with limited means in leading an immoral life. The women are harpies who have sunk so low more from want of modesty than anything else. They sell themselves to him who pays best, and delicacy or true love are to them unknown things." The great traveller and naturalist George Foster confirms that statement at least as regards women, whom he describes as "generally corrupted."

Though Frederick of Prussia and Joseph II. of Austria lived purely, at least after their respective accessions, and were, politically, epoch makers in history, they were both succeeded by rulers who were morally and politically decadent. Leopold of Austria (1790–1792) died after a reign of but two years, his death being caused by sexual excesses and debauchery with his German and Italian concubines. His private cabinet was, after his death, found to be a true "arsenal of lust."

Still more disastrous to Prussia proved the sovereignty of Frederick William II., nephew of the great Frederick; for during his calamitous reign of eleven years (1786–1797) this monarch disorganized the solid forces of the realm to such an extent that, a few years later, at the battle of Jena (1806), Napoleon succeeded, as it were with one blow, in overturning the proud structure of Frederick's state.

His court was the abode of an indescribable dissoluteness. As crown prince, he had been married to Princess Elizabeth of Brunswick, who, though not of good moral repute herself, nevertheless declined intercourse with her dissolute consort. We must waive the responsibility for the following report given by Scherr upon the authority of Dampmartin, the well-informed courtier. "Frederick the Great, desiring the succession to the throne to be ensured before his death, ordered an old chamberlain to communicate to the princess that he, the king, wished she should admit to intimate intercourse the lieutenant of the royal guard N. N. (Von Schmettau?), who had impressed the king by the beauty of his form, his conduct, and his bravery. But no eloquence prevailed upon the princess to yield to the shameless demand, whereupon the king resolved upon the divorce of his nephew." Frederick William II. later married Princess Louise of Hesse-Darmstadt,

who bore him an heir to the throne, the pure and honest Frederick William III. (1797–1840).

It must be said, however, that lawful marriage was but an episode in the life of the immoral king Frederick William II., while favorite after favorite divided his affections. Wilhelmina Encke, nominal wife of the chamberlain Rietz, later raised to the rank of Countess of Lichtenau, maintained her position with the king during his whole life, not only through the influence of her own charms, but by means of immoral services in connection with other beautiful women. Other ladies of noble birth, Julie von Voss and Countess Sophie von Dönhoff, exacted almost a formal marriage from the king while the queen was actually alive, and the Evangelical Consistory was compelled submissively to sanction the royal bigamy. Rich payments to the families of the royal pseudo-wives are on record, and prove the accumulation of a debt of forty-nine million thalers at the death of the king, who had had at his disposal the treasure of Frederick the Great.

It is with relief that we leave the pages stained with the depravity and moral bankruptcy of the era of Countess Lichtenau.

One royal woman, shining in the lustre of purity, genuine nobility, and self-sacrificing patriotism, dispels the moral darkness around her as the sun purifies and warms the atmosphere of the world. Princess Louise of Mecklenburg-Strelitz, consort of Frederick William III., mother of Emperor William I., great-grandmother of the actual German emperor, William II., is one of the purest and noblest of women of all times, and is rightly sanctified in the hearts, not only of all Germans, but of all, whether friend or foe, who have ever contemplated her life, her motherhood, her martyrdom, and her early death. From her pure bosom sprang, to a large extent, the present greatness of Germany.

Truly, were not the age too far advanced, Queen Louise deserved to be canonized. As if fate dared no relapse, no unworthy woman has succeeded her in the house of Hohenzollern. To offset the instances of the degradation of womanhood related for the sake of historical truth, let us twine a wreath of the laurel of fame, the myrtle of chastity, and the lilies of purity for her noble and beautiful brow.

A biographer well says of Louisa Augusta Wilhelmina Amelia, the fair, blue-eyed princess who was born on March 10, 1776, and baptized in the Church of the Holy Ghost, that the child was as sweet and fair as a lily unfolding in the genial sunshine of early spring. When the summer season of her life had run its course, when autumn's winds began to whisper that all bright things on earth must die to be renewed, the lily was gathered and taken away to bloom on in the Paradise above. Many eulogies were written in honor of Queen Louisa; one of the most pleasing is Jean Paul Richter's poetical allegory: "Before she was born, her Genius stood and questioned Fate. 'I have many wreaths for the child,' he said; 'the flower garland of beauty, the myrtle-wreath of marriage, the oak and laurel wreath of the love for the German Fatherland,—and a crown of thorns; which of all may I give the child?' 'Give her all thy wreaths and crowns,' said Fate; 'but there still remains one which is worth all the others.' On the day when the death-wreath was placed on that noble forehead the Genius again appeared, but he questioned only by his tears. Then answered a voice—'Look up!' and the God of Christians appeared."

As a maiden of fourteen, Princess Louisa, through a providential circumstance, became with her sister Friederika the guest of Frau Rath Goethe in Frankfort on the occasion of the coronation of Emperor Leopold. Goethe's famous mother considered herself highly honored in being

chosen as hostess to entertain the princesses. The occasion furnishes some very interesting glimpses of the character of both those famous women. Frau Goethe found the highborn sisters so simple-minded, so unaffected in their manners, that she was delighted with them. Frau Goethe, young with the young to the end of her days, entered into their enjoyment of scenes and circumstances invested with the charm of novelty for the light-hearted princesses. She never forgot the meeting with the future Queen of Prussia, and often used to tell a story about the pump in the rear of Goethe's house. When Louisa once espied the pump from the back room, she exclaimed roguishly: "I wonder if we could make the water rush out; how I should like to try." Upon a consenting wink, they rushed to the back yard and pumped to their hearts' content. The highborn lady-in-waiting was shocked and objected to their plebeian occupation, but Goethe's mother threatened to turn the door key rather than permit interference with the sport of her princely guests.

Bettina von Arnim, who was on terms of great intimacy with Goethe's mother, amusingly described in a letter to Goethe a meeting with the brother of the princesses, who had invited himself to eat bacon, salad, and pancake at Frau Goethe's house.

After the unfortunate campaign of the allies, Prussia and Austria against France in 1792, while the princes of Mecklenburg were with the army, Louisa and her three sisters were with their grandmother at Hildburghausen, comforting and cheering one another in those days of political desolation. Jean Paul Friedrich Richter, the poet, enjoyed the distinction of the friendship of the princesses of Mecklenberg. Louisa, at the age of sixteen, is thus described. She was like her sister Charlotte, had "the same loving blue eyes," but their expression changed more

quickly with the feeling or thought of the moment. Her soft brown hair still retained a gleam of the golden tints of childhood; her fair transparent complexion was in the bloom of its exquisite beauty, painted by nature as softly as were the roses she gathered and enjoyed. The princess was tall and slight, and graceful in all her movements. This grace was not merely external; it rose from the inner depths of a pure and noble mind, and therefore was full of soul.

On their return to Darmstadt, the capital of Princess George of Hesse, Louisa's grandmother, the princesses met the King of Prussia and his sons at Frankfort. It was an eventful day. The crown prince, later Frederick William III., whose "age was in sorrow, whose hope in God,"—as his motto runs,—was captivated by the loveliness of Louisa. Long years after her death he revealed his feelings at that momentous hour to Bishop Eylert, his spiritual friend and comforter in sorrow, referring to Schiller's words in *The Bride of Messina:*

"So strangely, mysteriously, wonderfully
Her presence seized upon my inner life;
'Twas not the magic of that lovely smile,
'Twas not the charm which hover'd o'er her cheek.
Not yet the radiance of her sylph-like form;
It was the pure deep secret of her being
Which held and fettered me with holy might.
Like magic powers that blend mysteriously,
Our twin souls seemed without one spoken word
To spring together, spirit stirred to blend
As we together breathed the air of heaven.
Stranger to me, yet inwardly akin,
Beloved at once I felt graved on my heart
'Tis she, or none on earth."

On April 24, 1793, the double betrothals between the two royal sons of Prussia and the two Mecklenburg princesses were celebrated at Darmstadt. At the encampment of Mainz, Goethe saw the royal brothers and their fiancées

walking through the canvas streets. Hidden in his own tent he was entranced by their charms: "Amid all the terrible and tumultuous memories of the war, the recollection of those two young ladies rises up before me like a heavenly vision, which having been once seen can never be forgotten." Princess Louisa may not even have known of Goethe's presence in the camp, but she knew his works well and admired especially his shorter poems. She certainly cherished the recollection of her stay in the great poet's house at Frankfort, in recognition of which Prince Charles Frederick of Mecklenburg had presented to Frau Goethe, as a token of thanks, a beautiful snuffbox which was to her almost a sacred relic.

On December 21st, Prince Charles Frederick, with his daughters and their grandmother, arrived at Potsdam, where they were awaited by the impatient bridegrooms. It was a day of universal joy, and every window of the city was illuminated when the royal visitors passed under the triumphal arch. Two days later there was a solemn entrance into Berlin. Universal was the admiration excited by the uncommon beauty and unaffected grace of the princesses. The foundation of Queen Louisa's popularity was laid. On Christmas eve, 1793, all the members of the royal family assembled in the apartments of the queen, where the diamond crown of the Hohenzollerns was placed upon Louisa's head. The entire court then betook themselves to the apartments of Elizabeth Christine, the unfortunate widow of Frederick the Great. What a contrast between this happy union of love, and that of the poor Princess of Brunswick who had been forced upon the unwilling Frederick! We learn from the court records that Louisa's bridal dress was entirely of silver lace, simply made, but that her corsage glittered with diamonds corresponding to those of the crown on her head.

This is not the place to dwell upon the home life of the royal couple, their happiness, their seclusion from the atmosphere of that corrupted court, Louisa's studies, especially of Shakespeare and the German classics, and the unconscious influence of purity that emanated from her presence. A sad time was approaching, and forebodings of political evil were not wanting. The king, whose private life had undermined his health, was slowly dying; but before the crown prince ascended the throne Louisa bore him two sons, both of whom were to be kings of Prussia, the second son was to be even Emperor of Germany and the restorer of the ancient glories of the empire. Louisa's husband, however, gentle, honest, upright, and his noble queen, the best beloved that ever ruled over Prussia, paid politically the penalty for their private happiness. The great statesman Von Stein rightly deemed him inadequate for the gigantic mission of reforming the decadence that had been going on steadily since the death of Frederick the Great: "I love him," he said, "for his kind, benevolent nature, his well meaning character; but I pity him for living in this iron age, in which to enable him to maintain his position, but one thing is necessary: commanding military talent, united with that reckless selfishness which can crush and trample everything under foot, and is ready to enthrone itself on corpses."

Nevertheless, the queen loyally aided her consort in his effort to improve the condition of the realm. Their travels through the provinces and the newly acquired Polish territories had a good effect. The domestic life of the royal family was a model one and made for morality in the lives of their subjects. The royal couple were patrons of arts and letters, and Queen Louisa was particularly enthusiastic in support of culture. But soon

the wheel of fortune turned; the king, pacific in the extreme, did not recognize in time that, unless he would join in the coalition against the overweening pride and power of France, Prussia would, single handed, be compelled sooner or later to meet that power. The battle of Austerlitz prostrated Austria completely, and the doom of Prussia approached.

In the years of threat and war Queen Louisa lost a beloved son, Prince Ferdinand, and the sorrow alarmingly aggravated her previous indisposition. The waters of Pyrmont restored her somewhat, and as for a time painful political events were kept from her, the change of scene and the affections of her relatives and dearest friends brought to her once more a glimpse of happiness, the last that was to come into her brief life. Yet her constitution had been shaken by the harassing anxieties of the situation, and added sorrow was soon to fall upon unhappy Prussia. The army was repeatedly defeated, and blow after blow fell upon the unhappy country. The queen and her children fled to the confines of the realm, to Kõnigsberg, the coronation city of the Prussian kings. There her third son, Frederick Charles, fell ill with typhoid fever. The child recovered, but his mother contracted the disease and again went down to the brink of death. The famous physician Hufeland describes the anxieties of the crisis: "The queen was in the utmost danger, and all night long the wind howled terrifically. . . . The wind was so strong, it blew down a gable of the old castle. By the blessing of God the queen passed over the crisis of the fever, and was beginning to rally, when suddenly came the news that the French were approaching. It was feared that the queen was not strong enough to bear removal, and it was therefore put off as long as possible, but she begged to be taken away, quoting the words of King David:

'I am in great straits: let us now fall into the hand of the Lord, for his mercies are great: and let us not fall into the hands of men.'" In a blinding snowstorm and a heavy wind the queen and the delicate prince travelled for three days along the strand of the Baltic to Memel on the Russian frontier on their tedious, painful journey to exile, knowing not whether they would ever return. Hufeland reports in his diary: "The queen spent the first night in a miserable room with a broken window, and we found the melting snow was dropping on her bed. We were very much alarmed on her majesty's account, but she was full of trust and courage, and the fortitude with which she suffered, gave us strength to act. I cannot say how thankful we felt when we came within sight of Memel, and just at that moment the sun burst gloriously through the clouds for the first time since we had been on this journey, and we hailed it as a happy augury." In Memel the queen recovered, though living under the most distressing circumstances.

After the retreat of the French from the frontier the Prussian court repaired again to Königsberg; the queen and Madame de Krüdener, the wife of the Russian ambassador, the religious friend of Czar Alexander, formed a lasting friendship. They attended frequently to the sick and wounded in the hospitals, and strengthened their faith in a bright future, at least for the unhappy country. After their separation, Louisa wrote to Madame de Krüdener: "I owe a confession to you, my good friend, which I know you will receive with tears of joy. You have made me better than I was before. Your truthful words, our conversations on Christianity, have left an impression on my mind. I have thought with deeper earnestness upon these things, the existence and value of which I had indeed felt before, but I had thought lightly of them, rather guessed

at them than felt assured of them. These contemplations brought me nearer to God, my faith became stronger, so that in the midst of misfortune I have never been without comfort, never quite unhappy. You will understand that I can never be perfectly miserable while this source of purest joy is open to me. . . ." And in spite of the loss of one-half of her realm, and in spite of all humiliations, joy was indeed vouchsafed her in the development of her noble children, whom she thus describes to her father: "Our children are our most precious treasures, and we look on them with happiness and hope. . . . Now you have my whole gallery of family portraits before you, my dear father. You will say they are painted by a foolish mother who sees nothing but good in her children, and is quite blind to their faults or failings. But really, I am watchful, and I do not notice in the children any dispositions or evil propensities which need make us painfully anxious. . . . Circumstances educate people, and it may be well that they learn to know the serious side of life in their youth. Had they been brought up in luxury they might think it was the natural course of things, that it must be so. . . ."

When we consider that Louisa speaks of the future king and the future Emperor of Germany, many things in the after history of Germany become clear to us! She truly estimated the unfolding dispositions of the future rulers of Germany. Posterity does not agree with her *first* modest words: "Posterity will not place my name among those of celebrated women, but when people think of the troubles of these times they may say: 'She suffered much and endured with patience,' and I only wish they may be able to add—'She gave birth to children who were worthy of better times, and who by their strenuous endeavors have succeeded in attaining them.'" Queen Louisa is the most

famous and the best beloved woman who ever sat on a Hohenzollern throne. Even to-day her portrait adorns nearly every Prussian home, and her beautiful form in Grecian attire, as a symbol of pure and noble womanhood, is found in thousands of American homes where the prototype may not even be known by name.

She died as she had lived. In the agonies of a painful death she preserved her patience and loveliness. When free from pain she lay very tranquil, looking like an angel, and now and then repeating to herself a few words of a very simple hymn which she had learned in her childhood. The unhappy king said at her death: "Oh, if she were not mine, she might recover." The king gazed on her dead form for a moment with a look of anguish which wrung the hearts of all who witnessed it; then he left the room, but soon returned with his sons. Her countenance was beautiful in death, particularly the brow; and the calm expression of the mouth told that struggle was forever past.

Sixty years later, in July, 1870, on the day of her death, William I. (1861–1888) visited her Mausoleum, and prayed before the recumbent statue of his great mother, as he did frequently, this time with a heart burdened with hopes and fears, for again a war of tremendous proportions, the national question of "to be or not to be," was pending with the same country under an emperor of the same ominous name—"Napoleon." Before Louisa's statue the aged monarch received the inspiration and the strength which nerved him for the last gigantic struggle.

Leaving the saintly Louisa, an entirely different type of royal womanhood demands our consideration, a type rendered noteworthy by sheer intellectual force. Catherine II., the Great, was the greatest woman, politically speaking, ever produced by the German nation; but her genius

benefited, or rather raised to world power, a foreign and rival state, namely, the Russian empire (1762–1796). Born at Stettin in 1729, and the daughter of the petty Prince of Anhalt-Zerbst, Catherine was married to Peter of Holstein-Gottorp, heir to the Russian throne, whose blind admiration for the great Frederick of Prussia alienated from him the affections of the Russian people; while Catherine identified herself with the Russians, whose future she was destined or determined to rule. Even as crown princess she led a notorious life, at first with Count Soltikof, and later with Count Poniatowski, afterward the ill-fated king of dying Poland; but she never forgot to strengthen herself, all the while, politically, and to secure all the instruments of power against her hated and despised husband. Peter was deposed, imprisoned, and strangled by Gregory Orloff, Catherine's paramour, certainly not without her knowledge (July, 1762). As empress, she forcibly obtained for Russia a controlling influence in the councils of Europe, while civilizing her people and mightily fostering the arts and sciences. Her literary and epistolary works and correspondence with the greatest men of her time prove her to have been a woman of extraordinary genius and literary capacity. As all her talents seemed to be out of proportion to womanly limitations, so were her immorality and passion. She ruled with an iron hand, through a succession of favorites or recognized lovers who, it must be confessed, had nothing to recommend them but the physical advantages of form and animal strength. The brutal Orloff, whom she raised from a low station, maintained himself longest in her favor, until his aspiration for the hand of his imperial mistress worked his undoing. Other men, selected partly from the ranks of the common soldiers, followed in rapid succession; finally, Gregory Potemkin became the most powerful of

all of them, until he was banished from the court for trying to win Catherine in lawful marriage. Potemkin endeavored, though with barbarous methods, to build up southern Russia, and remained Catherine's favorite, at a distance, till his death. Meanwhile, she chose her later lovers merely for personal gratification, so as not to endanger her autocracy by the presumption of powerful men. She had brought about the election of her favorite Poniatowski as King of Poland, but she tore the kingdom to pieces when she recognized that the conquest of Poland alone could make her beloved Russia a civilized European or Western power. The domestic reforms which she instituted along all the lines of political, economic, and sociological endeavor are stupendous, and, compared with them, the deeds of Elizabeth of England appear insignificant. Only the Titanic success of pushing forward the boundaries of the empire in all directions, adding to it the Crimea, the country as far as to the Dniester, with Courland and Poland, as well as the beneficence of her rule in the reform of justice, administration, and sanitation, the establishment of schools and hospitals, the building of canals and fortresses, and the improvement of the conditions of the peasants and of the lower bureaucracy, can compensate, in the minds of historians and publicists, for her private moral corruption and the gigantic immorality which she carried on without restraint and in open defiance of civilized moral order. She died of an attack of apoplexy in November, 1796. History remains doubtful which was greater, her boundless energy, ambition, and genius, or her superhuman immorality.

Returning to Prussia, we find weakness to contrast with Russia's strength. Fifteen years after the death of Frederick the Great, we have seen that Prussia was politically in a state of decadence. As of politics, so of morals; and even

the good example of the royal family was unable to redeem society from the demoralization that had seized upon the higher classes, and especially upon a great number of the officers of the army. Regarding them a credible report of a contemporary states: "The ranks of officers, already for a long time given over to idleness and estranged from science, are farthest sunk in debauch. They—those privileged disturbers—trample under foot everything which was formerly called sacred: religion, marital faith, all the virtues of domesticity. Among them their wives have become common property, whom they sell and exchange and seduce mutually. The women are so corrupted that even ladies of noble birth degrade themselves by becoming procuresses and panderers, to attract young women of rank in order to procure their seduction. One finds in the public houses true Vestal virgins as compared with many distinguished ladies who are the leaders in society. There are women of high rank who are not ashamed to sit in the theatre on the benches of public women, to procure for themselves lovers to go home with them. Many dissolute women of rank even unite and hire furnished quarters in company, whither they invite their lovers, and celebrate without restraint bacchanalia and orgies which would have been unknown even to the regent of France. Since Berlin is the central point of the monarchy from which all good and evil spreads over the provinces, the corruption has gradually expanded even thither." Forsooth, the ignominious defeat of Jena was indeed quietly preparing many years before it took place.

Prince Louis Ferdinand, a cousin of the king, a chameleon-like character, composed of some good and many evil qualities, who is still sung in German folklore,—owing to his heroic death on the battlefield against Napoleon,—was an exponent of that frivolous life. Like his prototype,

the Athenian Alcibiades, he was a devotee now to wine, woman, song, now to the strenuous life of a brave soldier and heroic patriot. One woman of wonderful beauty and of the temper of a Messalina,—to use Scherr's words,—Pauline Wiesel, held him under her demoniacal sway of never satisfied passion. But a woman of an entirely different type, the extraordinary Jewish authoress, and ingenious, spirited conversationalist and epistolographer, Rahel Levin, served him as a true Egeria in pure friendship and intellectual affinity. Rahel Levin is a great factor in the later time of restoration and one of its foremost personalities. Rahel, as the wife of Varnhagen von Ense, and Bettina von Arnim are the leaders of those women who exercised such a tremendous influence in the evolution of German womanhood during the first half of the eighteenth century. Their influence is enduring and makes even to-day for good.

It is incumbent upon us to retrace our steps to give a more orderly account of the literary, intellectual, and artistic woman. The initiators of that class, the Gottschedin and the Neuberin have been mentioned. Since the day of Frau Caroline Neuber, the status of the German stage had risen considerably. The theatrical companies of Schönemann, of Koch, of Ackermann had attained fame through their liberation from French types. Simplicity and naturalness became the ideal of playwrights. Friederike Hensel won the reputation of being the greatest German actress of her time, as Konrad Eckhof became foremost among the actors. These two, and Ackermann, with his daughter, Frau Löwen, and others, became—so to speak—the charter members of the newly founded National Theatre of Hamburg, for which Lessing was appointed *dramaturgiste*. After two years the enterprise failed, but nevertheless the ideal of what a German national theatre ought to be, was

created and expressed. Gifted women and Lessing—an extraordinary combination indeed!—had founded it!

Female literary work began more modestly. While a great poet like Lessing celebrated the great era of Frederick, while Ewald von Kleist sang his king and the Prussian army and of death for the fatherland—which glory fell to his share at the battle of Kunersdorf,—there arose also a female poet, Anna Louisa Karsch, of the newly won province of Silesia, who, in spite of her mediocrity, was celebrated as a Prussian Sappho. The experiences of her life, springing from abject poverty, or rather misery, her service as a stable maid, her marriage to a brutal old husband, and yet her constant endeavors to improve her mind under the most trying circumstances of menial labor and want, her divorce and remarriage with a drunken, lazy tailor, Karsch, who sold even the clothing of her children to indulge in his vice of drunkenness, read almost like a terrible nightmare. But the hour of salvation came. When her good-for-nothing husband was obliged to go to the Seven Years' War, the Silesian Baron von Kottwitz noticed her talent and took her to Berlin. In Berlin she soon became the fashion; she was received in literary circles, and her poetry was encouraged. The "German Horace, the thought-singing Ramler," informed her that Gleim, the poet of Prussian war songs, desired to know "his sister in Apollo." She hastened to write to the "Apollinian brother." Her friends secured her even an interview with Frederick the Great, who promised to take care of her, a promise which he forgot, however, in spite of her repeated rhymed exhortations. Later, he sent her a royal present of *two Prussian thalers,* which she promptly returned by mail. Frederick's successor directed "that a house should be built for her adorned with all the allegories of the Muses." In this she lived until 1791.

The estimate of her poetic gifts cannot be very high. She was a ready rhymester of a rather mechanical sort, but she was the first of the line of Germanic poetesses of the modern time, and as such her work deserves study and, it may be, praise.

Woman's love is the mainspring of action in poetry. But the sensuous and sensual side of woman's life not alone influenced the character and nature of—I may boldly say—all the German poets of the storm and stress period as well as of the great classical era. Their religious and ethical being was also powerfully moved by intellectual women. Goethe had become alienated from dogmatic religion, especially at the University of Leipzig, and when he returned sick and despondent to his native city, a friend of his mother, Fräulein von Klettenberg, by her "presence soothed his stormy, divergent passions at least for moments," and even won him over for a time to pietism. The mystic notions of the German Quakers, the Herrenhut brotherhood, besides studies in cabalistic alchemy, took, at least for a time, deep root in his soul. In his prayer he betrays an almost irrational longing for the union with God and separation from earthly things: "O that I could for once be filled with thee, Eternal One," and again: "Alas, this anxious deep torture of the soul, how long does it last on this earth!" Although after his recovery he was saved by his strong healthy nature from sentimental religious weakness, he always preserved a genuine toleration for the religious beliefs and errors of others, and his portrait of Fräulein von Klettenberg in his *Confessions of a Beautiful Soul,* will always remain a psychological masterpiece.

It was an intellectual woman, too, who succeeded in winning the poet Fritz Stolberg over to the Roman Catholic Church. Princess Amalia Galitzin, called the Christian

Aspasia, in Münster, the centre of Westphalian Catholicism, gathered the North German Catholics as well as the Orthodox Protestants around her, and exercised for a time a powerful influence.

As women at all times affected the hearts and souls of the great poets,—there is not one who was not moulded by womanly affections,—so they in turn were remoulded by the respective lovers. This is proved by the entire literature of the period. The great ballad poet Bürger, scorning the tenets of morality, leads a dissolute life; and this life is reflected even in his best work. He marries Dorette Leonhardt, while he already loves her younger sister Molly, and his passion for the latter grows more impetuous during his married life. As Molly returns his criminal love, the lawful wife resigns herself to a relation which destroys the lives of all three. After having lost both his wives in rapid succession, he commits the error of marrying a third wife, Elise Hahn, who, carried away by his poetry, offers herself to Bürger, whom she has never seen, and who romantically accepts her hand. But "the delusion was short, repentance was long." Elise's fickleness, frivolity, and manifest infidelity soon brought about a divorce. Broken in heart and spirit, the great poet, whose life had been wrecked by "the eternal feminine," which, instead of uplifting him, dragged him into the mire, died, solitary, wretched, and reduced to poverty and self-contempt. His poetry bears the traces of his ruined life.

On the other hand, the simple, virtuous and idyllic, pastoral life in Germany is charmingly portrayed in Voss's *Luise,* and is illuminated by Goethe's poetic genius in *Hermann and Dorothea.* Goethe, however, not only depicted idyllic life in poetry, but actually lived it in his student days in Strassburg with Friederike Brion, the pastor's daughter, of Sessenheim. The art of painting

has immortalized in numberless pictures the charming idyllic forms of the lovely shepherdesses, the Luises, the Mariannes. Miller's *Siegwart, a Cloister Story,* is one of the many picture books of the feminine soul of that complex period of simplicity and enlightenment. Chodowiecki, the great painter, is perhaps the best delineator of those typical figures of German womanhood.

Sophie La Roche, who had in her youth revolutionized the mind of the great poet Christoph Martin Wieland, was one of the most remarkable women of her time. Wieland, in his youth, conceived a passionate love for Sophie, whom he introduced into the treasure house of poetry, but his enthusiastic love for her did not terminate in marriage. She remained, however, during all her life his intimate friend, though Goethe's overwhelming genius made Wieland's star pale in her later estimate. As the wife of Maximilian La Roche, councillor of the Elector of Mainz, she turned to French literature, especially to Voltaire and Rousseau, and made her home "the place of spiritual pilgrimage on the Rhine for German authors. Young Goethe was received there, and—according to his disposition, against which he was quite helpless—revered the mother for the sake of her two beautiful daughters, who were just approaching womanhood. When her husband lost favor with the prince, Sophie supported her family by her writings as "the teacher of Germany's daughters." Her novels, written in the spirit of Richardson, are valuable records of the many-colored court life and of the activities of the social personages of her time. A modern author, Ludmilla Assing, has described the life of this extraordinary woman, who is to be remembered not only for her own merit, but as the grandmother of Clemens and Bettina Brentano; because of whom Sophie La Roche may be called the grandmother of German "Romanticism."

It is impossible to give even the most cursory account of the remarkable German women of this later period, for at every step we meet with such an *embarras de richesse* of extraordinary women, of whom voluminous biographical accounts have been written, that we can only select typical characters.

Besides Caroline Neuberin, the pioneer and founder of a respectable German stage, only one important woman played a rôle in the life of the grand Lessing. A great love awoke in his heart for Eva Kõnig, "the only woman with whom he would venture to live." To realize his desire, he accepted a poorly paid position as librarian at Wolfenbüttel. He was forty years old when the betrothal took place, but six years later his circumstances for the first time permitted him to marry. His happiness lasted but a short time. On Christmas eve, in 1777, a son was born to him, who died at birth; and two weeks later, to his inconsolable grief, he lost his beloved wife. His literary references to this great sorrow belong to the most pathetic passages in literature, just as his correspondence with Eva König, edited by Alfred Schöne, furnishes the most charming portrait of a great man.

Lessing's correspondence with Eva Kõnig is but an additional proof that among the most valuable documents adduced for the characterization of German womanhood are love letters to and from German women. Such letters are accessible to us from the thirteenth century. During the fourteenth century they become more numerous: a nun corresponds, perchance, with her father confessor; presents are exchanged, and sentiments, not always of a purely religious nature. Now and then the tender phrase is wanting, but is replaced by a crude picture of a heart pierced with an arrow. Later on we find an address like "lovable, subtle, beneficent, well-formed,

overloved woman." Luther greets his "friendly, dear 'lord,' Frau Catherine von Bora, Doctor Lutherin in Wittenberg" with teasing endearments, as he complains of the fare at the court of Saxony and expresses his longing for home: "What a good wine and beer have I at home, besides a charming wife, or should I say 'lord!'" An attractive originality shines forth from the letters of Duchess Elizabeth Charlotte of Orléans, and from those of Goethe's mother. Naturalness was the ideal in letter writing of the late eighteenth century, as artificiality had been that of the preceding era. Frau Gottsched, in her letters, reveals a roguish grace that contrasts with the stilted style of her tyrant husband. Goethe's letters of love and longing in *Werther* will stand as a model as long as literature shall be esteemed in the world, although there is a realistic and totally indefensible sentimentality in Werther's love of Lotte, the wife of another man.

Werther, beautiful of form, spiritual, and highly gifted, had, naturally, frequently aroused love without returning it; now Nemesis seizes him; he loves, loves to madness the wife of another man. The loveliness of Lotte (by the way, she is a real person, Charlotte Buff; while the lover is a composite of Goethe himself and young Jerusalem, who had actually shot himself at Wetzlar for the love of another man's wife), as we see her in pictures of German artists, feeding her numerous brothers and sisters, who cling to her, fans Werther's love, which is stronger than all the other forces of his heart. Unable to resist his passion, he chooses death as an inevitable necessity. The romance presented in the letters of the hero only concentrates the sequence of events forcibly upon the tragic climax. Lotte is the passive instrument in bringing about Werther's suicide. As to Werther—he is Goethe himself, the novel is simply a fragment of a great confession.

Goethe's numberless works, touching upon universal interests, are among the most profound and most exhaustive treatises on womanly nature ever written. Women accompany him through his long life and influence him at every step of his career as poet, philosopher, and statesman. His extraordinary mother, of a patrician Frankfort family, spirited, natural, poetic, with a melodious, beautiful soul, instilled into him the sense of the beautiful and perchance gave him creative force.

Cornelia, Goethe's only sister, also powerfully influenced and inspired him. She was to Goethe what Frederick the Great's favorite sister, Wilhelmine, was to her brother. Goethe delineated the characteristics of his charming mother in the character of Elizabeth, wife of Goetz von Berlichingen. Poor abandoned Maria is, according to Goethe's allusions, the martyred Friederike. Sister Cornèlia inspired the play.

The abiding effect of woman's love upon Goethe becomes manifest when we realize that an unhappily ending early love affair with Gretchen, a young girl of Frankfort, remained imprinted upon his soul for more than forty years, and served him as a prototype for his greatest, most complex, and most pathetic heroine, Gretchen in *Faust*. It is true that after the unfortunate ending of that romance at Frankfort he found sufficient compensation in his love for Käthe Schönkopf, the daughter of a wine dealer in Leipzig, at whose restaurant he boarded when a student of seventeen at the university. According to the portrait taken from the gallery of Goethean women, Käthe was a fascinating, round-faced girl. She gave up her ardent lover when he tortured her too much with his jealous whims, and the pain of that separation was dramatized by Goethe in his earliest play, *The Caprice of the Lover*.

We have briefly mentioned Goethe's return, broken in health and spirit, from Leipzig to Frankfort, the influence exerted upon him by Katherine von Klettenberg, his transfer to the University of Strassburg, and his idyl with Friederike of Sessenheim, which the most eminent German-American literary critic Julius Goebel calls, however, more fittingly "a tragedy." His famous poem, *The Rose on the Heath,* in which the rose is passionately broken by the wanton boy in spite of her protest, sums up in charming symbolism the sad story of Goethe's love for the unfortunate Friederike. What this charming flower of the parsonage had been to his youth, how he left her, the pangs of conscience which tormented him for a long time, his unfailing memory of her who never forgot him, and who died unmarried in 1813,—all this Goethe's genius characterized with psychological delicacy in his autobiography: *Fiction and Truth.*

Perhaps even more profound was the storm aroused in Goethe's soul somewhat later by his love for Lili Schönemann, who inspired many of his most beautiful songs and reminiscences. The daughter of a rich Frankfort banker, highly educated by her French mother, young and very beautiful, blond and graceful, in the enjoyment of all the social advantages of her position, she keenly aroused Goethe's emotions, while she also was deeply stirred to see that extraordinary man at her feet. She succeeded absolutely: Goethe became hers with life and soul, while, at the same time, he enjoyed with young Countess Auguste von Stolberg, sister of the two poets, a deep romantic friendship which survived all the storms of his eventful life. He never saw the countess, whom he nevertheless addresses familiarly as "Gustchen" and "thou." His correspondence with her sheds a wondrous light on his soul, especially with reference to his love for Lili. Lili

tried to win him, now paining him by jealousy, now soothing him by love. At last a formal betrothal was arranged, which was but the beginning of the end. He tried "whether he could live without Lili," and went on a journey to Switzerland with Count Stolberg. But he never forgot her. In a letter to Gustchen he calls her "the maiden who makes me unhappy without any fault of hers, she with the soul of an angel whose serene days I sadden!"

Lili Schönemann became later the wife of the Alsatian Baron von Türckheim, with whom she lived in happy marriage till her death in 1817. She confessed to her daughter as the true reason of her broken betrothal to Goethe the revelation made to her by her mother of Goethe's former relation to Friederike Brion and of his conduct toward her. Lili, though pure and true to her husband, never forgot Goethe; while the latter, in his age, confessed to Eckermann that "he had loved her deeply as no one before or afterward." Lili's biography, *Lili's Portrait,* written by her grandson, Count Türckheim, is an important chapter in the history of a cultured, high-minded, energetic, and exquisite womanly character, loved and lost by the poet-prince of Germany. It is not accidental that Goethe, distracted by the loss and not knowing where to turn, plunged into and translated just at that time Solomon's Song of Songs, which he described in a letter to his friend Merck as "the most glorious collection of songs of love God ever created." It is also almost providential that he received, even at that period of regret and despair, the renewed invitation of Duke Karl August of Saxe-Weimar, who had recently ascended the throne of his fathers, and who was destined to become the greatest Mæcenas of the century and, as it were, the sponsor of Germany's greatest intellectual bloom, to establish himself

at Weimar. There he arrived on November 7, 1775, at the age of twenty-six, received with universal rejoicing and enthusiasm. "New love, new life," arises for him in Weimar, and with his new love and new life a new era for Germany—the era of Goethe, or Classicism proper.

Chapter XI

Emancipation of German Women

XI

EMANCIPATION OF GERMAN WOMEN

WE have shown at length how the cultural, literary, and artistic grandeur of Germany during the Minnesong period was a direct consequence of the high elevation of woman, and due to the worship accorded to her on account of her lofty station. Just so woman was one of the strongest impelling factors in bringing about well-nigh all that was great and good in the second period of Classicism. The world-famed Court of the Muses at Weimar, presided over by Duchess Amalia, "as unique in her way as Frederick the Great was in his," and her circle of noble women, aroused all the poetic power of the genius of Goethe, and later that of Schiller. All the courtliness and elegance of their art, which had been evolved in storm and stress, sprang from their intercourse with noble women, a fact which Goethe again and again frankly confessed, and from which Schiller derived the loftiest inspiration. The ancient Minnesingers' glorification of ennobling love was renewed by Goethe, whose highest ideal of feminine perfection was one illustrious woman, in whom he discovered "all the lofty happiness that man in his earthly limitations calls with divine names," Frau Charlotte von Stein—alas! the wife of another man at the same court. She and Shakespeare—a strange combination—gave Goethe the incentive and stimulus by which were produced his immortal

works. This is proved by his statement: "Lida, happiness ever present, William, star of loftiest height, to you I owe all that I am." Goethe's relations with this extraordinary woman, says Scherer, developed in his nature all the tenderness of which he was capable. She was frank and true, not passionate, not enthusiastic, but full of spiritual warmth; a gentle earnestness gave her majesty; a pure, correct feeling, combined with a thirst for knowledge, enabled her to share all the poetic, scientific, and human interests of Goethe. In his numberless letters and fleeting notes to her we find strewn broadcast a thousand germs of the grandest poetry. Her spirit hovers around him everywhere; she possesses him entirely, body and soul; his feelings are expressed constantly in inexhaustible lyrical, frank, and caressing terms, more concise and natural than those in *Werther*. But the impetuous lover in *Werther's Sorrows* is here a brother and true friend. He becomes helpful, noble, and good,—his own words,—eager to cherish his friend, to smooth her pathway through life; his extraordinary and extravagant genius is calm and tempered. Frau von Stein brings forth the pure and religious forces of his nature. His hot blood becomes chastened; he himself calls the higher inner life that grows and strengthens itself within him "Purity," and his poesy, too, becomes Purity realized. The ethereal, ethical world in which his love for Charlotte forces him to live is reflected in his lofty creations of immortal beauty, in his superhuman contemplation of the universe, which is subject to change, it is true, but a change according to firm, logical, and eternal laws. Such is the influence of Frau von Stein upon Goethe, such her influence upon the loftiest expression of German thought and feeling, or, briefly, upon supreme German Classicism. Thus the dramas of the *soul* arise: *Iphigenie* and *Tasso*. In the

former, a pure priestess, though of an accursed house, brings liberation, purification, happiness, not only to her family, her race, but also to the barbarians, to the world at large. In the latter, women are again the guardians of culture and morality: in the character of the princess Leonore d'Este, who had learned toleration in the hard school of sorrow, who saves the poet Tasso from false and impure instincts, "as the enchanted man is easily and gladly saved from intoxication and delusion by the presence of the divinity," Goethe has united the traits of his guardian angels, Charlotte von Stein and Louise, Duchess of Saxe-Weimar, daughter of the Landgravine Caroline of Hesse, a great woman, of whom Wieland said, she would be queen of Europe if he once were ruler of the Fates.

But such exaltation, such freedom from passion could not last forever. That soul which Goethe knew so well, which "with tenacious organs holds in love and clinging lust the world in its embraces," in the course of time began to assert itself. And his intense need of sensual love was at last satisfied by Christiane Vulpius, a woman strangely inferior to the other women who had possessed his love, yet handsome, good-hearted, cheerful, natural, physically desirable, and devoted to him body and soul. Since the summer of 1788 she was really his wife, though the Church was not called upon to consecrate their union until October 19, 1806. In the high circles in which he moved, a storm of indignation was aroused by this union, which also lost for him the friendship of Frau von Stein, a loss which he deeply regretted. However, Christiane Vulpius gave him a calm and ordinary happiness that compensated him somewhat for his ideal losses; she was sufficiently dear to him to move him to the characteristic simile: "On the bank of the sea I wandered and looked

for shells: in one I found a pearl, it remains well guarded in my heart;" and again the beautiful allegory of the sweet flower, brilliant as the stars, which he dug out with all the roots and carried home, where it continues to blossom.

Women's love bore, from the first, quite a different character in the case of Schiller. He also had a good mother who believed in his genius and his future greatness, but born and raised in needy circumstances, and struggling with poverty all her life, she stood at an immense distance from the patrician and associate of princes, Frau Aja, the mother of Goethe.

Three widely differing women especially affected Schiller's life and works. The influence upon his youth of Charlotte von Kalb, an extraordinary, demoniacal woman, was, according to his own confession, not beneficent. In later years, this highly gifted and unhappy woman had the misfortune of affecting the lives of two other great poets: Jean Paul and Hölderlin. The former escaped from the grasp of the "Titanide" whom he immortalized, nevertheless, in his "Titan"; the latter, the God-gifted poet of "Hyperion," the singer of the passionate, soul-stirring lyric poems in honor of another love, Diotima, died early in the darkness of insanity. Schiller's love for Caroline and Charlotte von Lengefeld, the former of whom was married to Wilhelm von Wolzogen, presaged a terrible danger, similar to that to which Bürger succumbed, but which was averted by Caroline, who saved Schiller by smoothing the path to a lawful and happy marriage with her young sister. The correspondence between the three, Schiller and the Lengefeld sisters, published by Schiller's daughter Emilie, Baroness von Gleichen-Russwurm, sheds much light upon the thought and life of Germany's greatest dramatist and of two noble women. Caroline's biography of Schiller,

which appeared in 1830, collected from reminiscences of the family, his own letters, and information furnished by his friends, still breathes her love and admiring affection for her immortal friend. The greatest record, however, of the powerful influence women exerted upon Schiller is to be found in his works, not only in the dramas, but especially in the lyric poems, wherein a wonderful galaxy of noble women appear, and in which there is not one chord untouched that ever vibrated through man's heart.

Romanticism, the reaction against Classicism which had become icy and petrified in the "epigons," or weak successors of the great classical poets, entered upon its victorious course at the beginning of the nineteenth century. The group of women-authors, who stand, as it were, in the second zone from classicism, Amalie von Hellwig, Elisa von der Recke, Louise Brachmann, Agnes Franz, Helmina von Chezy, Johanna Schopenhauer, all authors of considerable talent and grace, are nevertheless far surpassed by the versatility and poetic impressiveness of the literary women of Romanticism. They are the inspirers and coworkers of the founders of the movement, the brothers Schlegel, Tieck, Novalis, Brentano, Arnim, Kleist, and others. It is true that the "blue flower of Romanticism" was not conducive to virtue in love. Romanticists respected marriage the least of all sacred things, and a marriage *à trois,* says Theobald Ziegler, was quite a common thing, and the question only remained whether a marriage *à quatre* was not even a pleasanter thing. In this, however, Romanticism was but a reaction against the Philistinism and prudery of the opposite pole of civilization at that period, where woman was oppressed, and a different standard of morality, and even of religion, was demanded from her than from man. Frederick Schlegel

is not far wrong when he says that in the ordinary wedded life of the time both parties "live on, side by side, in a relation of mutual contempt." As, at the time of Pericles the great and superior *hetaira,* Aspasia, raised the social status of woman in general, and succeeded in elevating her in culture to the standard of the most intellectual men, so, during the first decades of the nineteenth century woman was raised to a higher plane through a long series of moral aberrations. Emancipation was frequently misunderstood, and liberty degenerated into the license of the will of the flesh. It would be impossible to absolve Romanticism from the reproach of license in thought and life. We owe it to Caroline Schlegel and to Dorothea Schlegel not to unveil their antecedents, and the way in which they became the wives of the two romanticists. Their share in the movement of liberation and in the work of their respective husbands is very considerable, and, mayhap, is meritorious enough to cover their sins. Tieck's sister Sophie wrote perhaps the finest novel of the romanticists, *Evremont* (published in 1836 in Breslau), and his daughter Dorothea was a classical translator of Shakespeare.

Bettina von Arnim (died 1859), Brentano's sister, is one of the most ingenuous of poets. She possessed a rich imagination, but upon her was the common curse of womanly genius, eccentricity, and inconstancy. These frustrated her intense desire to attain a lasting fame. Her daughter, Gisela von Arnim, wife of Hermann Grimm, is a notable writer of fairy tales, and a dramatist of considerable merit. Another romanticist, Caroline von Günderode, who evinces much talent in her *Poems and Fancies,* had no time for the development of her genius. An unhappy love caused her to commit suicide at an early age. Such was also the end of Heinrich von Kleist, the greatest romanticist, who died with Henriette Vogel, the wife of another man, whom he

killed at her own desire, in 1811. Theodor Körner, the patriot and soldier-poet of *Lyre and Sword,* died young, on the battlefield, with a pure and noble love in his heart for Toni Adamberger, a charming actress in Vienna, who was worthy of him in every respect. Körner's letter of 1812 to his father, Schiller's friend, characterizes this noble type of German womanhood: "I may confess without blushing, that without her I should indeed have perished in the whirlpool beside me [*i. e.,* in Vienna]. You know me, my warm blood, my strong constitution, my wild imagination; imagine this impetuous soul of mine in this garden of delight and intoxicating joy, and you will understand that only the love for this angel helped me to be able to step forth boldly from the crowd and to say: Here is one who has preserved a pure heart."

In spite of the many eminent women who arose during the first third of the nineteenth century, there is nowhere in Germany anything like the *salon* which has made French society so brilliant, the literary circles and centres so compact, and the great French authoresses and epistolographers so world-famed.

Schleiermacher, the philosopher-theologian of that transition period, said once that society on a grand scale could at that time be found only in the houses of the Jews. Though still disfranchised in many respects,—their admission to all the rights of citizenship being accorded first in 1812 on account of Stein's reforms,—some eminent Jewish families possessed sufficient wealth and aspirations for culture to form such social and intellectual circles. Marianne Meyer became the wife of Prince Reuss, and as such assembled an aristocratic literary society in her house at Berlin. But the climax of a German salon was realized by two brilliant women of Jewish origin, Henriette Herz and Rahel Levin. The former, wife of the famous physician and philosopher

Marcus Herz, formed the first Goethe community in Berlin and scattered his fame broadcast through Berlin society. Without original talent, she exercised, nevertheless, great influence by her beauty, her social skill, and her ability in presenting the intellectual treasures of others. She was attractive to all. Jean Paul and Schiller came to her salon when in Berlin; famous foreigners, like Mirabeau, Madame de Staël, etc., visited her; the celebrities of Berlin were her constant guests, *e. g.*, the brothers Humboldt, the poet Arndt, Prince Louis Ferdinand of Prussia, the Duchess of Courland; foremost among all, Schleiermacher, who had a fantastic devotion and friendship for her; and Börne, who for a time loved her passionately.

The same personages and many others, especially foreign diplomats, artists, and noblemen, enlivened also the house of Rahel Levin, who in 1814 became the wife of the author Varnhagen von Ense. Rahel was not beautiful, or especially scholarly, but she was noble, helpful, and good; she was original, attractive, had the charm of "Attic salt" in her conversation, and understood how to listen as well as how to talk. As she had in her youth studied the poet Novalis and the patriot-philosopher Fichte, so later she studied Hegel's philosophy. She won the friendship of such men as Ranke and Prince Pückler. Her attractiveness did not depend upon her youth, for, according to the word of a lady of highest nobility, Jenny von Gustedt, "she touched with her philosophy life itself, her thought became deed, as she aroused with her spirit the spark of soul-life in others, as she tried to destroy pettiness in all hearts, as she awakened great things in the hearts of men without abandoning the delicacy of womanliness, thus she stood with full practical knowledge in the midst of practical life, helping, counselling, comforting, careless of thanks or ingratitude, the genuine, pure, German woman."

Such was the origin of the modern German salon, and its origin explains its complex character. The German salon became a permanency; and even though it never attained the brilliancy of the French salon, yet it was more intellectual and had greater literary effect. The house of Amalie von Hellwig was a centre for courtiers, scholars, and artists, one of whom, A. B. Marx, wrote an interesting account of social life in Berlin. Other distinguished circles are reported, in which music, a never failing charm in Berlin, was the principal attraction. The opera passed through a period of bloom. Spontini's and Weber's masterpieces were performed by excellent singers, like Anna Milder-Hauptmann, who, in Berlin, created the rôle of Fidelio. The theatre brought into popular prominence the works of the great German dramatists; great actresses arose, like Sophie Müller, who played in a masterful way Emilia Galotti and rôles from the works of Calderon and Shakespeare; Amalie Wolff, trained in Goethe's school, a masterly exponent of Iphigenie; Louise Rogée, later Holtei's wife, the incomparable performer of Kleist's *Kätchen von Heilbronn;* Charlotte von Hagen (1809–1891), a beautiful woman and true artist, who celebrated immense triumphs, and was adored by the great and beloved by the women. The greatest of all, however, was Auguste Düring (1795–1865), who for fifty years ruled the German stage, "in the world of boards that signify life." Henriette Sonntag (1803–1854) was considered the most beautiful and most gifted singer. By the charm of her voice and the perfection of her acting she conquered all hearts. In no other fields has Germany produced so many and so great women as she has in those of the stage, of music, and of song.

To appreciate, however, the ethical character of German woman we must return once more to the years of Germany's greatest political degradation.

At no time did the character of German womanhood shine in a more glorious light than in the sorrowful years of political upheaval and the trials of the years of humiliation at the beginning of the nineteenth century. When Germany lay prostrate under the heel of Napoleon, the standard of national honor was upheld by princely women, like the never forgotten Louisa of Prussia, and the other Louisa of Saxe-Weimar, Goethe's friend, who changed Napoleon's plan of crushing out the existence of her duchy, and concerning whom Napoleon himself confessed to his suite: "This is a woman whom our two hundred cannons could not frighten!" The years of trial, distress, and again the rising of the nation, the struggle for liberation, saw genuine heroism, superhuman sacrifices by German women of all estates and of all classes. Nothing but the enthusiasm and the patriotism of the women at that epoch could have inspired the men to their heroism, self-abnegation, and suffering. Niebuhr, the great historian, calls the conduct of the German women admirable. All pleasures were given up, tender and distinguished women exposed their lives to the lazaretto, washed, cooked, mended, laid down their money, their jewels, nay, even their beautiful hair on the altar of the fatherland. Mothers sent their sons, sisters their brothers, brides their bridegrooms, to the holy war. Many, forgetting their sex, seized rifle and sword, and fought against the oppressor. Scherr gives many names: Johanna Stegen, Johanna Luring, Lotte Krüger, Dorothea Sawosch, Karoline Petersen, and the heroine Prohaska, who, in male attire, bravely fought in Lützow's famous corps of volunteers. Lützow and the heroic Prohaska were severely wounded in the victorious battle of the Görde (September 16, 1813). When she was to be bandaged on the battlefield, she for the first time revealed her sex so that her modesty might be spared. She died

three days later, and was buried amid a concourse of citizens and maidens in the town of Danneberg, where a monument was erected at the church in her honor.

That deeds of heroism were done by German women outside of the battlefield, appears from many sources and particularly from Goethe's song of praise for the glory of Johanna Sebus, a maiden of seventeen years, who, during the flooding of the Rhine, January 13, 1809, saved first her mother, then returned to save a neighbor and her children, and then was herself swept away by the flood.

In the face of such proofs of heroism, we count but lightly against German womanhood a number of degraded women of noble, even princely birth, who helped to make such courts as that of Jerôme of Westphalia abodes of licentiousness. In German cities, especially in Berlin, where the conquerors were quartered, German ladies conducted themselves "with much dignity, and such reserve as was becoming them toward the enemies of their fathers, husbands, and brothers." Only the dregs of society were at the disposal of the invaders. Voss reports that "the frequentation of the temples of lust was so great that the number of Venus's priestesses was found to be too small." The shamelessness of vile women became intolerable. Unnatural vices arose, and continued despite the severity of the law, which the police strove to enforce rigidly.

During the years of reconstruction, however, which carried with them the social liberation of the peasant-serfs and the Jews, the autonomy of the communes unavoidably produced a mighty advance in the emancipation of women. The frivolity and immorality of Romanticism, which appeared barefaced in Schlegel's *Lucinde* and in the lives of almost all the romanticists in their intercourse with women, was indignantly rejected in those troubled times, and a

return to simple virtue, chastity, and housewifely qualities was preached and inaugurated. German youths began to yearn for pure and pious women, such as had fought in male attire for the fatherland, or healed the wounded patriots in the hospitals, or worked, suffered, and sacrificed fortune, comfort, and personal interests for the holy cause.

In the thirties of the nineteenth century, however, there was again, in the so-called Young-German movement, a retrogression to the lax morality of the first romanticists. The moral code of abstinence was represented as an antiquated conventionality, and the emancipation of the flesh was preached. Naturally the emancipation of woman became a principle of the new doctrine. Again Rahel Levin, the spirited Jewess, and Bettina Brentano (wife of Arnim), the free patrician, led the campaign, and added to arts and letters—the fields hitherto alone accessible to women—politics and religion. Freedom from the bonds of convention, liberation from social limitations, was the aim of the advanced women. They preached the extreme cultivation of their own individuality. They recognized only the perfection of love and beauty. The most earnest exponent of that exaggerated doctrine was Charlotte Stieglitz, who, to arouse her weakling husband from his indifference, committed suicide. By her voluntary death she wished to elevate him to activity, to heroism; desiring greatness for him, she thought she must inflict upon him a profound pain. Such exaltation and unnaturalness proves what an abyss threatens even the noblest woman when she once leaves the path of the normal. But to the Young Germans Charlotte Stieglitz became the heroine of the movement in which she had part. Theodor Mundt (died 1861) became the principal exponent of that unsound movement in Berlin. He was an author of repute, but is to us more important as

the husband of the celebrated authoress Luise Mühlbach, a serene, active, inspiring hostess, whose house became in the forties a centre of literary sociability in Berlin. She was also the writer of many historical novels, all of which are of great interest, though some are of doubtful value.

How confused the moral code of that time was appears, for instance, from Gutzkow's recommendation of a reform. He says: "Be not ashamed of passion, and do not take morality as an institution of the State! . . . The sole priest who shall bind the hearts, shall be a moment of rapture, not the Church with its ceremonies and well-groomed servants. . . ."

Saint-Simonism carried those licentious maxims to the extreme. Thus, the legitimate aspirations of woman to be freed from the fetters of the Middle Ages were, from the beginning, severely injured by lack of moderation. Instead of a claim for a systematic raising of the standards of education, impossible demands were made: immediate admission of women to the universities (without preparatory training), political equality with men, participation in the administration of the state, and even abolition of the fetters of marriage. Of course, opposition arose everywhere, and has neutralized or delayed even rightful claims to this day. The aspirations for material independence on the basis of free work succeeded to a certain extent: women entered many walks of life hitherto closed to them.

The most thoughtful and impressive champion of a reasonable emancipation of woman was Fanny Lewald. High moral earnestness and a clear intelligence pervade her writings, which are, however, lacking in poetic feeling. But she is a truly patriotic German woman who sees the need of a practical evolution of woman's education and activity in the interest of the entire nation. Her doctrine

is the assurance that the spread of culture will wipe out all artificial differences of caste, religion, and sex, and thus solve all the questions of a genuine, legitimate emancipation.

Countess Ida Hahn-Hahn illustrates an opposite tendency in the emancipation of woman. Born in a high sphere and miseducated by a perverse father in the prejudices of her station, she has a perverted view of her sisters of the people, of their struggles and desires and possibilities. Only the "noblesse," which is free from the cares of physical needs, is to her worthy of higher endeavors. The world of highborn womanhood alone attracts her attention. Her study of this world culminates in her opposition to marriage, which is to her an oppressive fetter, handicaps the enjoyment of life, and, therefore, is in almost all her novels the object of ridicule, and its abolition is recommended. Her heroines are, therefore, sensuous egotists who—according to her own words—seek nothing, wish for nothing, desire nothing but their own satisfaction, without regard to others. Thus, her novels, with their gospel of barefaced selfishness, are frequently offensive, but the atmosphere of "high society" has never been depicted with such masterly and many-colored vivacity as by Ida Hahn-Hahn.

The revolutionary year of 1848, which shattered many cherished idols which she had formerly deemed eternal, made a profound impression upon her. Under the influence of the eloquent Baron von Kettler, later Bishop of Mainz, who explained to her the great social questions of that stirring time, she became converted to Catholicism. The haughty spoiled child of the world became an expiating Magdalena; her work *From Babylon to Jerusalem* (Mainz, 1851) presents a wonderfully interesting revelation of a forceful and original heart. Instead of liberating

woman from the yoke of man, she now endeavors, through the influence of the Catholic Church, to liberate sinful, passionate mankind from earthly shackles. When she died, in 1880, she left an immense amount of literature, more or less valuable, but always intensely interesting to the searcher of woman's soul and achievements.

Ida von Düringsfeld was a poet and novelist of considerable force. Her novels present strong characters and fine descriptions of landscape and architecture; her translations of Czech and Italian popular songs are excellent; her work on *Proverbs of the Germanic and Romance Peoples,* published by her in collaboration with her husband (Leipzig, 1875), is very meritorious. What type of woman she must have been appears from the fact that when she died suddenly on a journey, her husband, unable to live without her, killed himself the next day, to be buried beside her.

The poisonous plant of the exaggerated emancipation movement appears in the works and life of Luise Aston, who impetuously demanded that all the barriers which custom, tradition, and artificial social contracts had erected should be broken down, for woman could fulfil her mission only in free love. When she tried to turn her theories into practice, she was successively exiled from seven German cities, and finally emigrated to Russia in 1855.

Besides this academic propaganda for woman's emancipation, a practical agitation of the question was carried on by a great number of pure-hearted and clear-headed women. They strove only for the possible. They began to teach that woman cannot emancipate herself by opposing natural laws, by becoming a *Mann-weib* (man-wife), as it is adequately expressed in German; but that she must retain all the peculiarly womanly traits, charms, and qualities, adding to them some art or science, trade or profession, by which she can support herself independently without

being absolutely forced into marriage, good or bad, with or without her will. The leaders of this movement are consequently no fantastic dreamers or theorists, but energetic, earnest women. The novels of Julie Burow, Louise Otto, and others of their school, greatly influenced and aided the movement. Since their day the agitation has become universal: thousands and thousands of strong and earnest champions have arisen; we stand in the midst of the movement, in the smoke of the battlefield; yet, great things have been achieved; able women, like Luise Büchner, Lina Morgenstern, Hedwig Dohm, have not striven in vain. Breaches have been made in the walls of the sanctuaries heretofore reserved for men. Incited especially by American and Russian women, the women of Germany knock, and knock successfully, at the doors of the universities and academies. Even though they do not yet occupy academic chairs in German universities, as they do in America, they will do so in time. A Swedish university was the first to appoint a woman, Sonya Kovalevski, the great Russian mathematician, to a full professorship of this manliest of all sciences.

Thus far the outcome of the entire movement, however successful it has been, is yet undecided, especially owing to the modest reserve and conservatism of millions of women. This conservatism seems to be deeply rooted in the hearts of the vast majority of German women. They are, after all, happy in the old, primeval, original royalty of wifehood and motherhood, in the sweet leaning upon their complement, the beloved husband. Do they fear, perchance, lest their warlike sisters might drag them to the front, to unnatural battle, deprive them of their sweet, foreordained inheritance of man's love, protection, and fostering care? Has not their quiet, calm, and holy circle of activity, upon which all that is eternal in creation rests,

which has been sanctified by custom, tradition, morality, and experience for thousands of years, blessed thousands, nay, millions of women, generation after generation? Had Saint Mary any other mission on earth or in heaven but love, infinite love, for the Christ, her Son? Has art ever been able to produce anything more beautiful, more divine, more touching, more powerful, than the Mother of God and the Christ-child, the symbol of every mother and every child? Do not the heavens in glorious constellations perpetuate the memory of great women? Is not the galaxy of women saints rich enough, and can it not be enriched still further for generation after generation to the end of the world? Is not well-nigh all the poetry that flows directly from the heart founded upon love, and indeed upon that love which is spontaneous, original, eternal? Forsooth, if there must be a change, it is a sorrowful change, due to the unnatural, complicated conditions of modern social life, but by no means due to the unanimous will of German women. The demon "physical hunger," the fear that there are not enough *good* men to go around, are the true motives of the emancipation movement with the masses of German women. The motives of the Ida Hahn-Hahns and the like are potent only with a few of the vast number of the women of Germany.

Thus it is but natural that the dangers of premature and ill-conceived emancipation soon aroused great and good German women who loved the best in the glorious past of Germany, the many models of German virtue, sacred simplicity, and blissful womanhood and motherhood, from Thusnelda to Queen Louisa of Prussia, and who were not eager for untried innovations. The very sight of the habits and nature of the new prophetesses, all of whom were abnormal in some respect, gave food for reflection. The strongest opposition to the movement was formed among

women. It was women who warned against the modern gospel, who tried to divert attention from the loud and boisterous street, rostrum, and salon to the innermost recesses of the heart where woman's happiness secretly dwells, and to the bosom of family life where the children enliven the little world which is, after all, the great world in *nucleo*.

Foremost among the intellectual guardians of the noble traditions of old German life was Annette von Droste-Hülshoff. Simplicity and an ardent religious feeling permeate her poetry, which she produced in abundance in spite of many obstacles put in the way of her intellectual pursuits by a prejudiced, bigoted, aristocratic family. Her poetry is rooted in the desire to induce the new "stormers" to cling to the old and tried German traditions of morality, faith, and patriarchal institutions. "Cling to thy friend, cling to thy word, cling to thy faith, cling to thyself," is her creed. "Who would exchange his blood for strange ichor (even though it were the blood of the gods)! Do not reject the Cherub of thy cradle; his wing will rustle to thee from every leaf! Do not suck dry the blood of thy heart, to animate therewith a bastard of thy soul."

Next important in her noble mission is Betty Paoli (Elizabeth Glück). Her thesis was: Church and society, fame and honor are the proper domain of man; woman can find her supreme happiness only in true, faithful, pure love for one man, and only once in life. Betty Paoli writes: "God has not sent me out, and has not given me the strength to aspire gloriously with a consecrated hand for the palm of victory. Let him be immortalized in marble and in brass who won them: I am nothing but a heart that has loved much and suffered much; and all my poetry is but an audible revelation of all the quiet pains of which a woman's soul is capable." According to her it is woman's

destiny to subject her life to the magic charm of love, to sacrifice all her desires and inclinations to love: "My proud head defied boldly the lightning of the storm; but when thou saidst: 'I love thee!', I sank quiet and weeping at thy feet—How weak am I!" In reality her happiness in love was short; the beloved one betrayed and deserted her; the deep sorrows of her heart find eloquent expression in touching and passionate melodies.

Luise Hensel's poems are simple and melodious, and are filled with a childlike humility. God and heaven are the motives of her song. There is a long series of women poets and novelists, who are defenders of the old faith, and whose works, though frequently insignificant, are yet noble monuments for German women of our own time who have offered a bold front to emancipation gone mad.

The impossibility of mentioning even the most eminent names of the German authors and poets is manifest when we consider the vast array of German women writers of the first quarter of the nineteenth century, catalogued by Schindel in a biographical work, published in Leipzig in 1823–1825; and in the two volumes of a *Lexicon of German Women of the Pen* by Sophie Pataky, which was issued in Berlin in 1898. A. Ungherini's *Biography of Famous Women* (Turin and Paris, 1892), also furnishes thousands of names of famous German women.

The inexhaustibleness of our theme leads us thus to abandon, even in the most general manner, the attempt at defining the impulses given by women to the poetry of the pure Suabian school of poets, to Uhland's veneration for woman, to Justinus Kerner's idealization of his wife Rickele, a model type of German hostess in whose vine-covered cottage many a weary poet's soul rested, as the deeply gifted, but profoundly unhappy Nicolaus Lenau. We forego to discuss the return of Mysticism which appears

in Friederike Hauffe, the Seer of Prevorst; in the lives and loves of Heine, who was tossed on the storm waves of life by woman's love and hate, of Platen, of Immermann, whose passionate love for Elisa von Lützow was finally converted to an almost ideal and platonic friendship; in the philosophy of Schopenhauer, who, though an atheist himself, was led by his argumentation well-nigh to Saint Augustine's doctrine of woman being the vessel of sin.

We have to descend to the lower grades of society, and observe woman in poverty and degradation, to learn of the need of the endeavors to elevate her, to free her, and to put her on her own feet intellectually, socially, and morally. When the Revolution of 1848 knocked at the gates of absolutism in Germany, German women began to assert their inalienable rights. The struggles of men in higher domains were shared by many women, among them Frau Struve and Frau Herwegh, the wife of the passionate poet of the revolution. Johanna Kinkel, wife of the excellent poet and university professor Gottfried Kinkel, who was incarcerated as a revolutionist and clad in the striped clothing of a criminal, until rescued by his faithful student Karl Schurz, now a great American statesman, endured with her husband the martyrdom of want and exile. Johanna Scherr, wife of the historian of culture Johannes Scherr, is also one of the noblest types of able and modest women and heroines, who are strong in endurance and even in encouragement of their husbands.

The changes in industrialism which began in the middle of the nineteenth century began to produce the mass misery of machinery with which the state was unable to cope. Crises were inevitable. The workingmen, grouped in industrial circles, deprived of the right of association for common protection, were often abused by employers, who had them entirely at their mercy. Wages were entirely

insufficient; *Hungerlöhne* became a technical term; women and children were forced to work in the factories to supply the deficit in the amount needed for the support of the family. Acute misery led to outbreaks like that of the Silesian weavers, whose misery inspired the modern social drama of Hauptmann; typhoid fever and diseases of starvation raged among the sufferers.

For the first time women entered the arena of the political movement. Societies of women were formed in many German cities. Names of gifted women sprang up everywhere. The social and political struggles of the time are reflected in the memoirs of an idealistic woman, Malwida von Meysenbug. Though reared in narrow aristocratic prejudices, she struggled through them to a democratic association with her suffering sisters of a lower social status. She bore the painful breach with her family which, owing to her liberalism, became inevitable. She demanded economic independence for woman, not only because labor ennobles, but because only the economically independent woman is free to live according to her convictions, "liberated from the threefold tyranny of dogmatism, convention, and the ignoble bonds of forced marriage." Woman is to coöperate in the great work of the regeneration of the nation. "How could," says she, "a nation regenerate itself and become free, if one-half of it is excluded from the careful, all-around preparation which true liberty demands for a nation as well as for individuals." An institution was already founded which was to accomplish this ideal. A university for females, at Hamburg, was to give to young women the necessary preparation for a higher mission than had been theirs. Energetic Emilie Wüstenfeld was the soul of the foundation, Professor Karl Froebel its head. Its aim was to embrace "all the sciences which practical, social, and intellectual life in its highest spheres may

require on the part of cultured women." It is a matter of regret that, owing to the lack of material support, the enterprise failed. Fräulein Meysenbug was, after the dissolution of the university, exiled from Berlin, whither she had turned, and went to England. Yet all traces of her influence are not lost in Germany. Small, slow, and painful attempts, an advance measured by steps, interposition of legitimate and illegitimate obstacles, appear everywhere in the movement.

Another eminent woman, Luise Otto, of Meissen, Saxony, a strong and able champion in prose and poetry for woman's rights, developed a definite programme for the movement: she demanded a profounder, a more national education, a closer connection of the German maiden with the affairs of the fatherland, through instruction in history, her education in schools of a high order, if possible leading up to the university standard, a training giving "solid moral strength, a religious mind, German depth of feeling." And these qualities must be instilled in the maidens of the people, of the proletariat as well as in those of the middle and upper classes. Luise Otto demanded that education to the very highest point be given to those able to receive it; that woman be raised to economic independence, that she may escape the necessity of a degrading marriage "for material caretaking only," or downright shame, to which so many daughters of the people have fallen. In a similar way did Luise Büchner attempt the solution of the all-important question of woman's independence. The active Central Union for the Welfare of the Working Classes, under Lette's presidency, was founded to extend the field of female activity, but it excluded explicitly the aims of political emancipation and equality of woman with man. The Universal German Woman's Association, founded in Leipzig, proposed to itself a broader scope, namely, the

raising of the moral status of the sex. Admission to the universities and participation in communal or municipal service were first mooted upon the initiative of Frau Henriette Goldschmidt, Marie Calm, Auguste Schmidt. Hundreds of other collective societies followed, and entered upon the discussion of the entire range of sex problems with marked results.

To protect the poor, especially the women and children, whose supporters went to the wars, the so-called "popular kitchens" (*Volksküchen*) were founded. This great service was rendered to Berlin by Frau Lina Morgenstern, aided by noble men like Virchow, Lette, and Holtzendorff.

Intellectual needs came to be supplied by excellent schools of a high grade: the Victoria School for higher studies, presided over by Frau Ulrike Henschke; the Victoria Lyceum, founded by a Scotch lady, Miss Georgina Archer, in 1868, to give courses parallel to those of the university. These institutions derive their names from the late empress, then Crown Princess of Prussia, who was their protector.

It was a matter of course that the woman's movement, which was rooted in liberalism, and which combined the aspects of psychological, physiological, ethical, and sociological problems, aroused many and varied opponents, especially in the conservative camp. The greatest names appear in opposition, even that of one important woman, Mathilde Reichardt-Stromberg. The discussions of the medical faculties of Germany for and against (mostly against) the admission of women to the study of medicine, which would be "an insult and sin against nature," would "destroy delicacy, modesty, shame" in woman, are to-day, now that women have attained their desire, of high value to the student of cultural history. On the basis of "the

right to work, the right to free personality," the privilege was demanded, especially by Hedwig Dohm, who says: "Woman shall study, because she wants to study, because the unlimited choice of a vocation is the main factor of individual liberty, of individual happiness."

The contest for the intellectual and economic advancement of women went on, almost side by side, with the contest for the moral regeneration of society. The fight against the cancer of prostitution, the darkest and sorest spot in the movement, was most arduous and discouraging. The demand of an equal morality for man with that incumbent upon woman was tacitly resisted. The puritanical regulations, issued by the German Culture Alliance, against alleged immorality in art, literature, and fashion conflicted frequently with the legitimate rights of artistic presentation. Frau Gertrude Guillaume, *née* Countess Schack, was the soul of the movement for social purity, and she boldly attacked the true cause of prostitution; she accused the authorities not only of indifference to the social evil, but of direct connivance with it. She came into conflict with the police, who considered her activity pernicious and accused her of socialistic tendencies, into which she was forced in 1885 by the chicaneries of the police. The fact of the matter is that her mission is diametrically opposed to that of socialism, which, according to Bebel's *Woman and Socialism,* considers "prostitution a necessary institution for civic society, as police, army, and church." It is the misery which wrecks so many families of the lower classes that drives thousands of hungry girls into the arms of prostitution. The statistics of the Berlin police authorities of a few years ago prove that of 2,224 registered prostitutes, 1,015 (47.9 per cent) came from petty artisan families, 467 (22 per cent) from factories, 305 (14.4 per cent) from poor clerks. In the Union

for the Interests of Working Girls, founded in 1885, the alpha and omega of the discussion of the girls was again and again "the correlation between hunger-wages and prostitution, and the necessity of raising the economic condition of the working girls as a *conditio sine qua non* for the elevation of morality." Efforts to abolish prostitution, then as now, were the objects of bitter opposition on the part of the civil authorities. Frau Guillaume-Schack, unable to continue her work unhampered by constant police interference, emigrated to England.

The reactionary spirit which in 1851 prohibited by ministerial decree Fröbel's kindergartens of Prussia as socialistic and atheistic exists even to-day in the German parliament, especially through the conservative and clerical parties. These stigmatize many of the most legitimate aspirations of women as "unwomanly." The word of Saint Paul, "woman shall be silent in church matters," is applied to her most appropriate activities. Yet, superior women, foremost among them Frau Henriette Schrader, Frau Marie Loeper-Housselle, and the eminent sociological writer Helene Lange, against great odds, forced the government to make provision for the higher education of girls. Not that the Ministry of Public Instruction was favorable to the demand, but that the extensive discussion by the daily press, the interest taken by the Crown Princess Victoria in the movement, and the formation of the Universal Women Teachers' Association, which has more than sixteen thousand members, compelled the powers that be to consider the movement as elemental and irrepressible. The first public "gymnasium" (Latin school) for girls was founded in Carlsruhe, Baden, in 1893; later another was established in Leipzig, and the higher courses for girls that had been established in Berlin by Helene Lange, were also consolidated into a gymnasium.

On the other hand, the Bavarian ministry refused its consent for such a school in Munich, and Dr. Bosse, former Minister of Public Instruction in Prussia, rejected a similar petition from the Breslau magistrate. Upon an interpellation in the Prussian Diet (*Landtag*) he declared himself "against any step in the direction of the modern woman's movement; the aspirations of women to appear as rivals of men are wrong; this was the opinion of the entire Prussian Ministry of State." Elsewhere the movement was branded as a mere "matter of fashion." But the aspirations of women are too genuine and deep-rooted to be disposed of by ridicule and abuse. New fields of labor open before women, the domains of letters and sciences lie before them, even though the honor of state recognition is withheld from the treasures of knowledge and thought which they have acquired. Reformers of both sexes, who have the influence and the will to bring the issue to a successful conclusion, are not wanting. All the divisions and sections of the movement for morality, temperance, legal protection, right of coalition, girls' homes, march separately, but fight with a united front in the campaign. The Society for Ethical Culture, led by the late Professor von Gizycki and his wife Lily, of Berlin, realized within the society the idea of absolute equality of the sexes. Excellent women, as Jeanette Schwerin, Minna Cauer, and many others worked for woman's economic improvement as a basis for their enfranchisement; others, like Frau Hanna Bieber-Böhm, for the protection of young homeless girls by the foundation of homes, and by assistance in cases of need. Several periodicals edited by women for women also carry on a lively and successful propaganda for enlightenment and progress. That the various religious denominations participate in the movement more or less successfully, according to their various dogmatic or

liberal standards, goes without saying. That there is frequently a painful exaggeration on the part of the women who stand in the midst of the struggle is but natural. Revolution is preached instead of evolution. Passionate cries too often are heard against men in general, as if the war were raging between brutal and oppressive men and oppressed and abused women. The ridiculous Utopia of emancipation from men, the foundation of a "manless" Amazon empire is being preached by some radical women crazed by their mad prejudices. Womanliness is lost all too often; manly garb imitated, the customs of male students, which are not always æsthetic, and which are downright disgusting in woman, are aped. Some women try to force their way by elbow power, by loud screaming for their alleged rights; some "literary" women without tact, training, or moderation, create prejudices against their judicious sisters who try to win their way by the peculiarly womanly, refined and æsthetic qualities in literature. No wonder that thousands of the very best women instinctively shrink back from the movement, and thus withdraw their support from what is legitimate and needful and desirable to woman.

In similar circles, with equal difficulties and drawbacks, moved the progress of women in Holland and the Scandinavian countries. Multatuli (pseudonym for E. Douwes Dekker, 1820–1887), through his genius and originality, attained in Holland well-nigh the importance of a Goethe for his nation. He considered the prevailing opinion regarding the inferiority of woman as the result of her long oppression, and preached her self-determination to the point of free love. He is the father of the movement for the liberation of woman in conservative Holland, and Mina Kruseman and her friend Betsy Perk, the first champions of the woman's movement, are his direct disciples. Frau

Storm van der Chijs (1814–1895) attempted to introduce educational reforms and higher scientific culture into Holland. Fräulein W. Drucker sought and obtained the support of the Dutch women in the agitation against the abuse of woman, and child labor in the factories, as hod-carriers; for the protection of illegitimate children, and for a higher training of women for skilled labor. Frau Klerck, *née* Countess Hogendofp, profoundly touched by the social misery of fallen women, founded with the aid of a number of noble women, the Woman's League for the Elevation of Morality. About five hundred societies are scattered through the kingdom and exert their beneficent influence in all the domains of female activity. The Netherlandish universities opened their doors wide to female students after the graduation of the first woman, Alletta Jacobs, as "M. D." in 1879. Many Dutch women are active and successful in arts and letters; Minka Bosch Reitz is favorably known as a sculptor, Theresa Schwarze as a painter, Fräulein Oosterzee as the composer of an oratorio, and Catharina van Rennes as a composer of children's songs.

An exposition of the works of Dutch women at The Hague in 1898, planned by Frau Pekelharing-Doijer, presided over by Frau Goekoop, gave an admirable survey of the entire domain of the activity of Dutch women. The exposition aroused the feeling of solidarity among women, which resulted in the formation of associations composed wholly of women; the nation, the government, and the queen took a lively interest in the achievements of the Dutch women, whose enfranchisement, though just begun, is moving rapidly to completeness.

The same progress is visible everywhere in the other Teutonic countries, Denmark, Sweden, Norway. Excellent abstracts of that progress are given by Kirstine

Frederiksen, Maria Cederschioeld, and Gina Krog, respectively, and in Helene Lange and Gertrude Bäumer's admirable *Handbook of the Woman's Movement* (two volumes, Berlin, 1901). We must, however, regretfully forego the pleasure of enumerating even the foremost of the thousands of women with their varied talents, many of the highest order, who belong to the knighthood of the spirit, and who labor bravely in the realm of advancement of the human race in general, and of the Teutonic family in particular.

This chapter would, however, be incomplete and unsatisfactory were we to conclude it without mentioning a few German women who, preëminent and royal, have wielded an immense influence, and in whom, as it were, are crystallized German virtues, German qualities, and German intellect.

The first German empress, Augusta, the daughter of Carl Frederick of Saxe-Weimar and of a Russian princess, was reared in the atmosphere of the Court of the Muses at Weimar; so that the image of Goethe hovered around her throughout her life, and influenced her artistic, literary, and humanistic tastes. At the age of eighteen, in 1829, she was married to Prince William of Prussia, little dreaming at that time of the great future in store for Germany and for herself. By her intellectual qualities, her humanity, and her charity, she soon acquired a highly privileged position at the Prussian court. It was she who inculcated into the soul of her only son, later Emperor Frederick III., those qualities which secured for him the historic title "Frederick the Noble." After her consort ascended the throne in 1861, and especially after the great wars, she became the soul of the great charitable movements of Germany. She took an active part in bringing about the establishment of the Geneva Convention, a most beneficial

event in its effects upon the humanization of war and its consequences. She was an angel of mercy to the wounded soldiers of both friend and foe, and to their widows and orphans, and was active in the Society of the Red Cross, founded in 1864, and the Patriotic League of Women, founded after the Austrian war in 1866. The Augusta Hospital, the Langenbeck House in Berlin, named after the great surgeon of that name, and the Augusta Foundation in Charlottenburg, were created by her. She was deeply religious and broadly tolerant; so that the so-called *Kulturkampf, i. e.*, the struggle between the Prussian state and the Roman Catholic Church, was profoundly distasteful to her, a fact which precipitated a silent, but bitter, feud between the empress and her party, on the one hand, and Prince Bismarck, on the other. While her political influence cannot at all times be considered to have been beneficent, her cultivation of the arts certainly enriched the national life of Berlin, and indeed of Germany. She was a cultured musician, and composed several marches, an overture and the music to a ballet—*The Masquerade.* She died in January, 1890, in Berlin, and was buried beside her great consort in the Mausoleum of Charlottenburg. Beautiful monuments have been erected in her honor at Baden-Baden, at Berlin, and at Coblenz, her favorite resort. The memory of the noble empress is engraved upon the hearts of her people.

Victoria, princess royal of England, born November 21, 1840, daughter of Queen Victoria and the Prince Consort Albert, became eighteen years later the wife of the Crown Prince of Prussia, finally, for ninety-nine days, Emperor Frederick III. (1888). She came to Prussia when the dawn of its future greatness was scarcely visible. The king, Frederick William IV., was hopelessly ill, his mind affected; her father-in-law, Prince William of Prussia and

in 1861 king, was regent for him. The times were gloomy: constitutional conflict, political struggles threatening the monarchy itself, then a seven years' war as it were with Denmark, Austria, and France until 1871, agitated the country and tried the soul of its rulers. This was the time when Victoria appeared greatest and dearest to the German people. From the royal palace to the poorest cottage, there was no household then that had not sent its best and bravest to defend hearth and home and fatherland. The heir to the throne, following the traditions of his race, had gone forth ready to yield up his life, if need were, for the safety and honor of his country. The princess, waiting wearily in her home, shared the anguish of every German woman during that autumn and winter. With her clear insight into political complications, she could realize more vividly than those who were less well informed the frightful contingencies that might arise. She felt deeply her obligations toward the support of her countrywomen. The crown princess as such, in her own name, addressed an appeal to Germans all over the world, in behalf of the families that sacrificed their supporting fathers, brothers, sons:

"Once more has Germany called her sons to take arms for her most sacred possessions, her honor, and her independence. A foe, whom we have not molested, begrudges us the fruits of our victories, the development of our national industries by our peaceful labor. Insulted and injured in all that is most dear to them, our German people —for they it is who are our army—have grasped their well-tried arms, and have gone forth to protect hearth, and home, and family. For months past, thousands of women and children have been deprived of their bread-winners. We cannot cure the sickness of their hearts, but at least

we can try to preserve them from bodily want. During the last war, which was brought to so speedy, and so fortunate a conclusion, Germans in every quarter of the globe responded nobly when called upon to prove their love of the Fatherland by helping to relieve the suffering. Let us join hands once more, and prove that we are able and willing to succor the families of those brave men who are ready to sacrifice life and limb for us! Let us give freely, promptly, that the men who are fighting for our sacred rights may go into battle with the comforting assurance that at least the destinies of those who are dearest to them are confided to faithful hands.

"VICTORIA, *Crown Princess.*"

A truly German woman and princess indeed! She was worthy to be the consort of Frederick the Noble, and the mother of William II., who has imbibed her genius, her versatility of mind, her fine artistic feeling. Politically she was broad-minded and strictly constitutional; in her home, a true German housewife and mother. She loved the arts, sciences, and letters, and was herself no mean painter. Charity was her chosen domain; the education of the lowly her passion. The Pestalozzi-Frœbel House is her monument; the Museum of Industrial Arts in the Königgrätzer Strasse is perhaps more representative of her artistic efforts than any other institution in Berlin. It is said that the princess chose, if she did not design, each of its sculptured groups, its metal castings, its fine mosaics and ornaments. Hans Holbein the Younger and Peter Visher, the famous brass founder, stand at its portal; life-sized figures round the building represent the mechanical arts: the loom, the printing press, the potter's wheel, the student's desk; the frieze above represents the great

epochs of art and sculpture. The Victoria Lyceum, which we have mentioned above, testifies to her great interest in the higher culture of women. Space forbids us to follow the years of peace, of achievements, of joys and griefs in the princely household, the loss of the beloved young Prince Waldemar; the political controversies which followed the princess's disapproval of many measures, in the inner policy of Prussia, taken by Bismarck; and at last the long and hopeless illness of her consort, her touching sympathy and devoted care of him until his death on June 15, 1888, and certain medical altercations that disturbed her years of sorrow and mourning.

It would hardly be proper to speak at length of Augusta Victoria, the present Empress of Germany, who stands now in the prime of her life and activity for her nation and her own family. She is a princess of Schleswig-Holstein-Sonderburg-Augustenburg, who became the consort of the ruler of the German Empire instead of becoming a ruling princess of a petty grand duchy, the rightful inheritance of her house, which became part and parcel of the empire by two great wars. Married in February, 1881, to the present emperor, she is the mother of six sons and one daughter, all of whom are worthy scions of the Hohenzollern race, which has furnished the world with more great rulers than perhaps any other dynasty that ever ruled over the fate of a great nation. The empress is the crystallized type of a noble German wife and mother on the throne. She is profoundly religious and especially active in the duties of a devout Christian; she has built many churches; she is the protectress of the Elizabeth Children's Hospital, of several great Evangelical missions, and of the Patriotic Women's League. It is difficult to emphasize sufficiently the great influence upon the morality

of the entire nation of an empress so womanly and pure in her simple greatness, just as we cannot estimate the influence for evil by bad examples on the throne on every woman in the land during the eras of the Catherines of Russia, the Pompadours and the Dubarrys in France, the Lichtenaus in Prussia.

In contrast to the happiness of the present Empress of Germany stands the fate of the late martyred Empress of Austria (1837–1898). A daughter of Duke Maximilian Joseph of Bavaria, she became the consort of the present Emperor of Austria under the happiest auspices. Exceedingly beautiful and intelligent, a Greek scholar of a high order, a lover of nature and of all that is beautiful, fond of horseback riding and of every sport tending to produce that symmetry of intellectual and physical beauty called by the Greeks *kalokagathia;* the happy mother of daughters and of one son, the ill-fated crown prince, Rudolf, she adorned the Habsburg throne with beauty and brilliancy instead of the ancient formal etiquette and Spanish *grandezza*. But sorrow came to her in its most terrible form: the tragic and mysterious death, while on a hunting expedition, of her son Rudolf and Countess Vetsera, whom he loved, though he was married to Stephanie of Belgium, broke her heart. Her entire life changed, she hid herself in her Greek palace on the Island of Corfu, or travelled restlessly through Europe. On a visit to Geneva, while walking from her hotel to the ship, she was assassinated by a miscreant Luccheni, an Italian anarchist (September 10, 1898). One of the vilest deeds in the history of criminology ended the brilliant life of the greatest woman martyr on a throne since the Austrian archduchess Marie Antoinette who shed her royal blood on the guillotine, as Queen of France in 1793, for the crimes of preceding royal generations.

Among the German women authors of the last quarter of the nineteenth century who are really gifted with great poetic talent we meet with a poetess, a German princess on a foreign throne: Princess Elizabeth of Wied, Queen of Rumania, famous under the name of Carmen Sylva. She belongs to a family which for many generations has produced remarkable men. Her great-grandmother, Louise von Wied, was a poetess of considerable talent; other members of her family had excelled as naturalists, poets, and painters; three of her granduncles fell during the Napoleonic wars. The genius of her family seems, however, to have been concentrated in Carmen Sylva. She was exceedingly beautiful in her youth, and is charming to-day at the age of sixty. As a child of seven in Bonn, she frequently sat on the lap of the aged patriot-poet Ernst Moritz Arndt, who inspired the little princess with his patriotic tales. Her youthful sorrows, the loss of a beloved brother and of her father, and the protracted illness of her mother had a deep and melancholy influence upon her. Extended journeys to the south, to Sweden, and to Russia widened her poetic horizon. In 1869, Prince Carol of Rumania wooed the "Forest Rose," as she was called poetically; in 1870, all the wondrous feelings of a happy mother and a great poet were opened to her by the birth of a daughter; four years later she lost her child, and then she sings the words of despair: "For what purpose the great royal castle, we are but two!" She translated into German verses the Rumanian songs that had pleased her child, and later she translated many of the great Rumanian poems. There is in them the wild melancholy and simplicity of true popular ballads; there is the ring of a poetic sympathy with nature. They come straight from the heart of the people, and the translation is full of the same poetic feeling. Her *Thoughts*

of a Queen (Paris, 1888) are worthy of a Pascal in their depth and earnestness and wide range, covering life, humanity, love, happiness, sorrow, pain, spirit, and art. She is of a wonderful intellectual and spiritual fertility. She wrote *Pilgrim Sorrow,* which has reached its fifth edition, and has been translated into English by Helen Zimmern. *Sappho, Hammerstein, Storms, Some One Knocks* (translated into French, prefaced by Pierre Loti), *From Two Worlds,* and *Astra* are universally recognized.

It is indeed a strange phenomenon that the two most gifted German poets are a queen and a peasant woman: Johanna Ambrosius. It is true that the refinement, the melody and sweetness of Carmen Sylva contrast with the painful plaints of poor Johanna, who suffered physical want many times during her life. Yet both have been in their way chastened in the school of pain and sorrow, only it was in one case the sorrow of the hut, in the other the sorrow of the royal palace.

Of the other women who have excelled in letters in recent times, the great majority exerted their influence through novelistic literature: Wilhelmine von Hillern, spirited, though somewhat too sensational; Louise von François, who skilfully characterizes higher society; Adelheid von Auer (pseudonym for Charlotte von Cosel), who depicts the social sins of the higher classes; Emmy von Dincklage, the painter of the life and nature of the lowlands on the Ems; E. Vely, Helene von Hülsen, Fanny Arndt, Eudemia von Ballestrem, and scores of others whom in the evolutionary process of the present time we must not attempt to describe prematurely.

Indeed, life wells forth with ever increasing strength from the inexhaustible fountains of women's hearts, leaving the problem in the mind of the observer where all this activity is to end, and reminding us of the Earth-spirit's

chant in *Faust* with reference to the "Creative Power" which eternally works and weaves:

"In the tides of Life, in Action's storm,
A fluctuant wave,
A shuttle free,
Birth and the Grave,
An eternal sea,
A weaving, flowing
Life, all-glowing.
Thus at time's humming loom 't is my hand prepares
The garment of life which the Deity wears."

Chapter XII

Women of Russia

XII

WOMEN OF RUSSIA

In the dawn of recorded history woman on the great plains of eastern Europe shared the lot of her western sisters. She was purchased into her husband's family or carried away, she was sometimes only one of his many wives, she took care of the household and helped him in the field, participated in his manly sports, accompanied him in his military expeditions, enjoyed full social freedom, was treated with respect, ruled the state, and was sometimes burned on the funeral pyre with her husband's body.

Russian annals have preserved for us a picture of one of the most wholesome women of early, heathen Russia—Princess Olga Igor. The Prince of Kief, Olga's husband, lost his life while collecting tribute on the upper Dnieper and left her a widow with a child in her arms. She avenged her husband's death on his slayers in true heathen fashion. She destroyed their ambassadors by burying alive some of them and burning others. She besieged their capital, took it, and laid a heavy tribute on them. Having thus performed her last duty toward her husband, Olga, as princess regent, travelled over all her country and made every effort to introduce a good system of government.

She defined the amount of taxes to be paid by the different provinces, left her fiscal agents behind her, and

established courts of justice. Before her death Olga visited Constantinople and returned home a Christian.

To the deep respect for Olga's wisdom a Russian annalist ascribes a preponderating influence in the introduction of Christianity into Russia from the Byzantine Empire rather than from Rome. The Christian clergy immediately began a struggle against polygamy, deeply rooted in the early Russian society, and endeavored to prevent the excess of parental authority in the arrangement of marriages against their children's wishes. Valuable civil rights were secured for women, such as the right to inherit property and to bequeath it to their children at pleasure. But together with the praiseworthy efforts of the clergy in regard to women, there came, too, an undesirable influence. The Greek priests, full of holy zeal, considered it their sacred duty to combat idolatry in all its forms, and proscribed all ancient religious and semi-religious observances as unholy and coming from the evil one, who deluded the simple-minded and the uncautious into sinful practices and thus led them to eternal damnation. The clergy put an end to many games and pastimes, which formerly brought together persons of both sexes, and little by little the church removed woman from male society. To eastern as well as to western monks of ascetic aspirations woman was a source of evil, and therefore had to be kept out of man's way.

During the epoch of troubles and confusion which followed the years marked by the introduction of Christianity, the woman of the higher class of Russians became more and more isolated from her former surroundings. The Tartar invasion and domination only contributed to the separatist tendencies in Russian society. Formally, woman retained her old right of being her husband's friend, companion, and adviser; she owned property in her own name,

disposed of her dower at will, and was entitled to a share of her husband's property on his death. But as a matter of fact, the Russian woman was her husband's slave. She was excluded from that part of the house where her husband received his men friends.

Domostroi, the Russian domestic code, compiled in the sixteenth century confines woman to the kitchen and to purely domestic occupations. Woman's virtues are said to lie in silence and humility. She was to speak only when spoken to. She was to ask questions and advice with utmost deference. She was to have no secrets from her husband. Her husband's will was her law and her guide in life. Her aim in life was to save her soul, to please God and her husband. Her husband could even apply the rod to her in case of a serious transgression on her part. In her harem-like seclusion, Russian woman acquired a taste for luxury in apparel and house decoration and developed many varieties of fine handiwork.

This seclusion of woman and her separation from her husband's company had as their result a general coarsening of social tastes. Men amused themselves with bear hunting, pugilism, and other rough sports. When engagements were arranged between persons totally unacquainted with each other, when a wife was purchased, when another girl was substituted in the place of the one bargained for, and when the engaged parties could not see each other until the very wedding ceremony, marriages were often a failure, and led to a mutual deceit, secret immorality, and not infrequently to crime. Even one of the most enlightened Russian writers and educators of the seventeenth century, Simen Polotski, advised that woman should be kept like a slave or a wild beast. We read of many cases where men chastised their wives with heavy whips.

One Russian woman is reported to have frequently cried over the fact that her husband, a German by birth, would not whip her, which to her was a sign of indifference. Men got rid of their wives by sending them to a convent, or by poison. The code of Alexis Mikhailovich does not even punish a husband for disposing of his wife in a criminal way. But if a woman destroyed her husband, she was buried in the ground up to her neck, and everybody had a right to abuse her until she died.

There was no education to be had for woman, and she grew up, lived, and died in ignorance and superstition. The Russian Middle Ages have left to posterity the memory of only one woman who took an active part in history—Martha Boretskaia, the wealthy *posadnitsa* (mayoress) of Novgorod the Great. The steady growth of the power of the Moscow princes in the fifteenth century began to be dangerous to the independence of the ancient northern republic. The intelligent, energetic, and freedom-loving Martha became on her husband's death an active leader of a powerful political party advocating union with Poland, a union which was to save Novgorod from being subjugated by Moscow. Conscious of her power, Martha often offended the Moscow representative in Novgorod, and was slow to give satisfaction to Ivan III., whose life work it was to unite all Russia under the sovereignty of Moscow and to throw off the Tartar yoke.

In 1471 there was a stormy town meeting in Novgorod in connection with the election of a Moscow partisan to the office of the Archbishop of Novgorod. The adherents of Martha found themselves in a majority. An embassy was immediately sent to the King of Poland, offering him the supreme power over Novgorod if he consented to rule according to the ancient liberties of the republic. Ivan III. tried to conciliate the city by entreaties, but these failing

with the proud *posadnitsa,* he moved his army toward Novgorod, defeated the troops of the republic in several engagements, laid a tribute on the conquered, exacted a promise to discontinue all relations with Poland and Lithuania, and extorted an oath from the Novgorodians by which they recognized him as their supreme judge. Ivan did not dare as yet to meddle with Novgorod's local self-government and political freedom. But Martha could not be subdued, and soon the parties renewed their struggle. The sympathizers of Moscow were persecuted and complained to Ivan. Under a flimsy pretext Ivan again led his army to Novgorod, was admitted into the city without resistance, and joined it to his domain. Martha was arrested and exiled to a convent in Nizhni-Novgorod. Her spirited though unsuccessful resistance to the growing power of Moscow gave her a lasting name in Russian history. With the accession of the Romanoffs to the throne a new and more promising era began for the Russian woman. Matveyeff, the favorite boyar of Alexis Mikhailovich, was an admirer of the culture of western Europe and treated the women of his family with marked consideration, freely admitting them into the society of his friends. His clever ward, Natalia Kirillovna Naryshkina, attracted the widowed tsar's attention and became tsarina and mother of Peter the Great.

In the palace of Alexis women enjoyed almost modern freedom. They were allowed to go out of the palace, and to go to the theatre. A daughter of Alexis by his first wife, Sophia Alexeyevna, received as complete an education as could be had at that time in Russia. She grew up to be a woman of unusual intelligence, energy, and ambition, and on her father's death began a struggle with her stepmother, Natalia Kirillovna, for political predominance. The disorderly and unruly standing army of the Russian tsars,

the Strelets, sided with Sophia. Having secured the regency of Russia during the minority of her brothers, Ivan and Peter, she soon acquired almost absolute power. Slighting custom and tradition, she lost no opportunity to appear in public. In the matter of religion, her advanced ideas led her to support the orthodox, or reform, party. The conservatives, or "old believers," having challenged to a discussion the orthodox prelates, Sophia convened a meeting, to be held in the Palace of Facets, on which occasion she presided. The discussion was of such a stormy character that violence was used, and the leader of the "old believers," Nikita, was afterward executed by order of the empress. She made peace with Poland and China. In 1689 Peter decided to rule independently. The chief of the Strelets, being unable to raise his troops in defence of Sophia's interests, decided to assassinate Peter. The plot did not succeed: its instigators lost their lives, and Sophia was immured in a convent. She caused a revolt of the Strelets during Peter's travels abroad, but they were again subdued; many of them were hanged under the very windows of Sophia's retreat. Sophia died in 1704, leaving the memory of a rare intelligence and an indomitable energy, overmatched only by that of her great brother.

Peter the Great found the Russian woman a painted doll, hung over with pretty ornaments and trinkets, eating fattening foods and sleeping all day long in order to get stout, for stoutness at that time passed for beauty. Peter forbade the clergy to marry persons against their will, and required a formal engagement six weeks previous to the wedding, so as to give persons a chance to become acquainted before they were bound to each other for life. He introduced public theatres, and compelled persons of both sexes to attend them. Social intercourse of the sexes, under modern and civilized restrictions, was forced

not only upon the Russian nobility, but upon the merchant class. Receptions were compulsory functions; these were attended by both men and women. At these receptions, and generally in public, Russians, particularly women, were required to wear western European dress in public. This movement toward the social emancipation of the Russian woman inaugurated by Peter found a powerful support and development during the reigns of Peter's female successors. During the eighteenth century, Russian women were taking part in all the court revolutions. During that time, too, social morality was at a low ebb, owing to a lack of moral restraint.

Peter died in 1725. After the weak reign of Anna Ivanovna (1730–1740) and the unpopular one of her foreign successor, the supreme authority passed into the hands of Peter's daughter, Elizabeth Petrovna (1741–1762). She was skilfully kept in the background by the family of her predecessor, spent all her time in amusements, and apparently took no interest in state affairs and politics. As Peter's daughter, she was adored by the people and by Peter's Old Guard, whom she attached to herself by constant kindness and attentions. She was an embodiment of unaffected simplicity, warmth, and sunshine, and her apparent light-heartedness and gayeties put to sleep all suspicion of seeking to gather the reins of power in her own hands. But on the night of November 25, 1741, after a prayer and a solemn oath never to sign a death sentence, Elizabeth put on a cuirass, went to the barracks, led the grenadiers to the palace, had the reigning family and their supporters arrested, and was proclaimed empress in the morning, amid general rejoicing.

Though not inheriting all her father's gifts, Elizabeth possessed a high degree of intelligence and showed much wisdom and insight in the selection of her assistants in the

work of governing Russia. She was deeply interested in state affairs, and established a special council whose sessions she often attended. The people called her their "little mother," and in her soul Elizabeth remained a thorough Russian, though into her court a splendor equalling that of the French king was introduced with her accession to the throne. She faithfully adhered to her father's rule in life—to do everything for Russia and through Russians. The leading positions in all departments of government were given to Russians, and Elizabeth consented to the appointment of foreigners even to places of secondary importance only when no Russian could be found with the necessary qualifications for the office. Peter's reforms and the work of civilizing Russia by the introduction of western culture and education were continued by Elizabeth. A new Russian literature and a higher learning had their birth during Elizabeth's reign. It is true that her wars weakened Russia, but they gave training to Russian generals, and prepared the ground for Elizabeth's successors. The favorites and assistants of the empress were mostly men of ability and broad aims. They encouraged popular education and native literature, fought indolence and corruption, which were deeply rooted in the government, endeavored to do away with the abuses of the provincial authorities, and to increase the government revenue, not by fresh taxation, but by developing the natural resources of the country. A better system of taxation was introduced, and Peter's idea of taking a census of population from time to time was revived. The burden of the compulsory service in the army was made lighter. A higher value was set on the workingman, and capital punishment was entirely dispensed with. Pioneer settlements were encouraged in the eastern part of European Russia, beyond the lower Volga. Mines were opened and worked.

Russian commercial caravans began to reach Tashkent. Government banks were established which lent money to merchants and landowners on easy terms. A special "commerce commission" was created to look after the welfare of the trading class. A general government survey put an end to many territorial disputes among landowners. The internal custom duties were abolished. A new system of public instruction was being gradually built up. The first Russian university was founded in Moscow in 1755, and the Academy of Fine Arts in Saint Petersburg two years later. Two high schools were established in connection with the university, and public schools were opened even in Orenburg and in far southern Russia. Young men were encouraged to enter foreign universities. Efforts were made to raise the intellectual attainments of the Russian clergy and to make use of it toward the enlightenment of the people. The national consciousness awakened. A new literary language took form and shape, Russian satire began to deride the foibles and the shortcomings of society. Lomonosoff acquired reputation as a scientist and a man of letters even in western Europe. A national historian appeared in the person of Tatishcheff. The first Russian daily paper, the *Moskovskiia Vedomosti,* was published in 1756, and the first Russian monthly appeared in the same year.

Elizabeth did not succeed in all her efforts to raise Russia to the level of her western neighbors. There was much conservatism to overcome. There were wars to pay for—wars which exhausted Russia's resources. But Elizabeth was preparing the way for her energetic successor, Catharine II., who always held Peter the Great as an example before her eyes and who continued his work of reform. During Catharine's reign a woman, Princess Katerina Romanovna Dashkova, was put at the head of

the Russian Academy of Science. The princess was a phenomenal woman. She was an accomplished linguist. an enthusiastic reader, an admirer of Bayle, Montesquieu, Boileau, and Voltaire. She travelled abroad, made the acquaintance of many great writers and philosophers, and became one of the most enlightened women of her time. She early manifested a taste for politics, and Catharine owed her a debt of gratitude in connection with the revolution which overthrew the unpopular rule of Peter III. (1762). The most important service, however, was rendered by Princess Dashkova to her country not in the field of politics, but through her connection with the academy. It was her aim that arts and science should not be the monopoly of the academy, but "should be adopted by the whole country, take root and flourish there." The public lectures established by her in connection with the academy became very popular and drew large audiences. She increased the number of fellowships given by the institution and sent Russian students to Göttingen. A "Translator's Department" was established which enabled the Russian society to read in their own tongue the best productions of foreign literature. Several periodical publications were started under the impulse given by the princess, and the best Russian writers, even the empress herself, sent literary contributions to them. One of the most important undertakings of the academy was the publication of a dictionary of the Russian language to which the princess copiously contributed. She wrote for magazines, and translated from foreign languages. Among her works we have poems in Russian and French, a number of speeches made before the academy, one comedy, one drama, and interesting memoirs.

The great drawback to the social and intellectual progress of woman in the Russia of Dashkova's time was the

general lack of educational facilities. In the early Russia only daughters of princes and of the higher nobility could obtain instruction even in reading and writing, though the importance of educating women was always appreciated. At the end of the eleventh century a princess-nun founded a girls' school in Kief. A Russian metropolitan bishop of the sixteenth century spoke in his sermons of the value of the education of women. Beginning with the first tsar of the house of Romanoff, the tsarevas were instructed in reading, writing, and church music. The six daughters of Alexis Mikhailovich received a good education. Peter the Great fully appreciated the importance of schools for women, but did not establish them. During his reign, however, as during that of Elizabeth, there began to appear private schools, to which girls were admitted. A ukase of Catharine II. laid the foundation of an Educational Society for noble young women, and in connection with it a high school for the daughters of town residents. The chief aim of Catharine's institution was the formation of character, the development of good habits, good social manners, and self-reliance in the pupils. Many other schools were opened in Catharine's time, not a few of which were under her patronage, to which children of both sexes and of all social classes were admitted, though it was considered improper for girls to attend public schools. Catharine sought to create a "new race" of men, as well as of women, by offering the latter all possible advantages of education. The policy of Catharine was dominated by her desire for the aggrandizement of Russia and the extension of the central rule. One of the most striking results of her active government is the extraordinary exodus of Kalmuck tribes in 1771. These people are of Central Asian origin. Their incursions led them early in the seventeenth century into Russian territory, where they

secured a foothold in the region east of the Volga. Other immigration followed till the Kalmuck population and power became considerable. Generally nomadic in their habits, they dwelt in circular felt tents, and were impatient of government, but about the middle of the eighteenth century they came into voluntary subjection to Russia. Their splendid horsemanship and hardy character made the Kalmucks a most valuable auxiliary force to the Russian army. But Catharine's measures proved irksome to the independent spirit of some of the tribes, and an immense number escaped from Russian despotism and resumed subjection to the less active tyranny of the Chinese ruler.

After Catharine's death, the Empress Maria Teodorovna, wife of Paul I. (1796–1801), continued her educational work, though abandoning the "new race" idea, confining herself to more practical problems, and recognizing the different needs of different classes of children. A large number of schools was founded by the empress, the management of which was after her time given in charge to a special department of government bearing her name. The schools rapidly increased in number, variety, and character, and gradually the ground was prepared for the present system of public and high schools for girls, which, under the auspices of the Department of Education and of the ecclesiastical educational establishments, are to be found throughout the vast Russian empire.

Long before public schools existed, and long after they were in operation, there was another educational agent to which Russian woman owed most of her accomplishments and to which Russia is indebted for many of her most accomplished women. This is the private instruction in the home, which was conducted by French, German, and English governesses and tutors, when a family could afford them. This method has brought and is still bringing the

culture and the polish of western Europe to Russia. It has made accomplished linguists of so many Russians, and has opened to them the treasures of the world's literature.

The field of letters was the first in which Russian women distinguished themselves. One of the brilliant women of the first half of the nineteenth century was Princess Zenaide Alexandrovna Volkonskaya, who devoted herself to literature. Having received a fine education at home, she spent many years abroad, in Paris, Vienna, and Verona, during the time of the famous congresses which met there to settle the fate of kingdoms and empires. Returning home, the princess devoted herself to the study of Russian antiquities. At one time her studies were treated with such scorn among her circle in Saint Petersburg that she retired to the more appreciative atmosphere of Moscow. She was much admired by the leading men of letters of her time. To the life of the primitive Slavs she devoted two of her most important works. A poet and a musician, she wrote cantatas and composed music for them. She spent about one-half of her life in Rome, where she died, a devout Catholic.

Beginning with the year 1860, women began to appear in the lecture rooms of Russian universities. The attitude of universities to the presence of women within their walls was not always the same, but their attendance was generally discouraged. Finally, a lack of social and political discretion and tact on the part of some women legally closed the university doors to all, and Russian women were forced to seek higher education abroad. A movement was started at home in favor of establishing schools of higher learning for women, and resulted in the so-called "higher courses for women" in Saint Petersburg, Moscow, Kasan, Kief, and Odessa, which were conducted by the university professors of those cities. The "courses"

were not uniformly successful. Those of Saint Petersburg have shown the greatest strength and vitality, having been conducted with skill and having met with strong moral and financial support on the part of Russian society. Professional schools for women, medical schools, normal schools, and the like, have had a more uniformly successful career. The status of education for woman is not so advanced in Russia as it is in some countries, but the future is promising.

About the time of the emancipation of Russian peasants by Alexander II. (1855–1881), Marko-Vovchok (Maria Alexandrovna Markovich) attracted much attention by her stories picturing Russian life and advocating the liberation of the serfs. Among the large number of Russian women who have acquired reputation in Russian literature, special mention should be made of Khvoshchinskaya. She received a fine preparatory training at home; then in 1867 she began to study law in German universities, and took her doctor's diploma in Leipzig. She spent several years studying the Common Law of the Southern Slavs, and made several original contributions to legal literature. In 1885 she began to publish a magazine, *Severnyi Vestnik* (*The Northern Messenger*), which had many women among its contributors. It remained five years under her editorial management.

During the nineteenth century many Russian women distinguished themselves in the field of arts and science. Madame Kochetova may be mentioned as one of the many gifted actresses. Madame Esipova has acquired a world-wide reputation as a pianist. Marie Bashkirtseva found her way to the French Salon, and left to the public a diary vividly picturing her striking individuality. Born in Southern Russia, Mademoiselle Bashkirtseva, when ten years old, settled with her family in Nice. She began at an

early age to show her gifted nature, her love of knowledge and her lofty ambition. When only thirteen, she made out a programme of her studies, in which were included mathematics, physics, chemistry, Greek, and Latin. She spoke English, German, and Italian from her childhood days. French was the language in which she did her thinking and writing. She, too, was an enthusiastic student of music. In 1877, Mademoiselle Bashkirtseva settled in Paris and began to study painting. After eleven months' work she received, at a general competition in her school, a gold medal awarded by Robert-Fleury, Bouguereau, Lefevre, and others. In 1880, when twenty years of age, her first picture, *A Young Woman Reading 'La Question du Divorce' by Alexandre Dumas,* was admitted to the Salon. Her next picture in the Salon, *Julian's Studies,* was spoken of by the Parisian press as a work full of life, with firm touch and warm coloring. Two years later her *Jean et Jacques,* representing two little schoolboys from the poorer class of the Parisian population, attracted general attention and was very highly praised by the press: the picture showed the artist's power, boldness, and fine insight into the realities of life. In 1884 the *Meeting* of Mademoiselle Bashkirtseva occupied the leading place in the Salon, owing to its excellent delineation of figures, fine presentation of types, and correctness of detail. That same year the young artist died of consumption. An exhibition of her pictures made by the society of French woman artists exhibited the great variety and productiveness of her talent. Mademoiselle Bashkirtseva left about one hundred and fifty pictures, sketches, and drawings. Some unfinished studies in sculpture showed her great talent in that direction also. Her numerous sketches manifest her warm love of humanity and the great depth of her powerful talent. The French government purchased the best of

Mademoiselle Bashkirtseva's pictures for a national collection, while the public throughout the civilized world have read in an abridgment of the artist's diary the story of her life and of her struggle with worldly temptations and vanities.

The end of the nineteenth century witnessed the death of a prominent Russian mathematician, Sofia Vasilievna Kovalevskaya. She, too, received her preparatory training at home, from foreign governesses and private tutors, and early showed a taste for mathematics. Her conservative parents would not allow her to continue her studies away from home, and in order to obtain her freedom, she married early and went abroad to study her favorite subject. For two years she attended lectures on mathematical subjects in Heidelberg, studied in Berlin under Weierstrass, and, in 1874, at twenty-four years of age, took her doctor's degree at Göttingen. Seven years later, Madame Kovalevskaya was elected a member of the Moscow mathematical society. In 1884, after her husband's death, she received the chair of mathematics at the University of Stockholm. She soon mastered the Swedish language, and began to publish her mathematical works and contributions to literature in that language. In 1888, the Paris Academy of Science awarded to Madame Kovalevskaya a prize of five thousand francs for her work on the rotation of a solid body around a stationary point. In the following year she won fifteen hundred crowns from the Academy of Stockholm by a similar work. In 1889, two years before her death, she was elected corresponding member of the Academy of Saint Petersburg.

But mathematics was not the only accomplishment of Madame Kovalevskaya. She was a woman of great depth of feeling and of keen observation, and possessed, in a high degree, the ability to picture her inner life in literary

and artistic form. Her personal life did not give her all she expected from it, and in her *Struggle for Happiness: Two Parallel Dramas,* she tried to present the fate of a person from two opposite points of view,—how it was and how it might have been. She was a strong believer in predestination, but at the same time she admitted in human life the existence of moments when alternatives are presented, the choice of which will shape human life in accordance with the path taken: she saw a parallel to her theory in Poincaré's work on differential equations. Madame Kovalevskaya's literary career had just begun to develop and her contributions to magazines to be universally admired when pneumonia put an end to her work and to her abundant promise.

The field of the Russian woman's activity is as wide as it is in western Europe or in America. In some respects there is in Russia less prejudice against woman's adopting a professional career than is found in more civilized countries. Women compose the ranks of the teachers in the public schools throughout Russia. There are many women physicians and registered minor medical practitioners and trained nurses whose services are particularly valuable to the Mohammedan female population. Many a Russian woman wears the uniform of the government telegraph operator. She has legal right to practise law. She takes part in local government on the same level as men when there is no one to represent her interests. She has won her position by her energy and talents as well as by her moderation, tact, deep earnestness, unselfishness, and readiness to sacrifice herself for the welfare of her fellow men and women.

In Russia there are several business firms conducted wholly by women. They once startled the former famous minister of finance, Witte, by sending him a petition

requesting him to allow them to do business on their own account in the stock exchange instead of employing brokers. The minister asked for time to consider the petition.

The change which has taken place in the condition of the woman of the well-to-do classes during the last two hundred years has not affected the most numerous class of the Russian population, the peasant woman. For years, while special schools were being founded for the daughters of the noble, the merchant, and the burgher families, she bore with her husband and family the yoke of servitude, at times degrading and intolerable, was the lord's property, body and soul, was worked like a domestic animal, sometimes sold away from her family and otherwise abused. When the emancipation came with the imperial decree of February 19, 1861, she began to breathe more freely. Now the elementary education, at least, is accessible to her, and when means allow there is nothing to keep her from obtaining the highest education to be had in the country. Even in her modest station throughout the centuries the peasant woman has not remained intellectually inactive. When students of Russian literature became interested in the national folklore and began to collect it, they found a large number of peasant women in the northern provinces of Russia who possessed astonishing memories and who dictated one long epic poem after another to the collectors. These female Homers took pride in their accomplishment and were highly respected for it in their neighborhoods. While the chief merit of these poem singers lies in their highly retentive memory, women singers of another type, the professional mourners at funerals, display creative genius in composing and improvising songs. The names of peasant women who composed some of the most popular Russian songs are known, and in the latter part of the nineteenth century one of

them was living in a western province of Russia. In vocalization Russian women have few equals among their class, both in civilized and uncivilized countries, this owing to the richness and vigor of their voices, to the characteristic fondness for music, and to the beauty of the national music. Women sing their babies to sleep, sing at social gatherings in and out of doors, sing while spinning and weaving, going to work and returning from it.

Russian woman has shown much artistic skill and taste in domestic manufactures. Her crochet work, laces, and embroidery deserve high praise and will doubtless be appreciated when they become better known outside of the comparatively narrow circle to which they are now confined. Russian peasant women have studied medical botany from time immemorial. For centuries they were the only physicians within the reach of the people. Even at present, when doctors with university training are accessible to almost everyone, peasants frequently prefer the ministrations of female herbalists.

In her home the Russian woman is a hard and steady worker. She gets up at daybreak and tends her cows, cooks and serves the family breakfast and the rest of the meals, keeps her house tidy, does the family sewing and washing, is her family dressmaker and tailor. She transforms the main room of the house into a factory in spring, and on her looms turns into crashes and homespuns the result of a winter's work at the spinning wheel. When the harvest time comes she does a good share of work in the fields. A woman parasite is unknown to the peasant family and can have no place in it. The Russian peasant woman earns her position in life through honest, wholesome toil by her husband's side. Her reward is the respect and consideration paid her. She is treated in the family as her husband's equal. Under special conditions she has

a voice in the village folkmote, and has a right to a share in the village landed property on equal footing with men. She is not debarred even from holding offices in the village administration. Peasant women of ability have acted as preachers and spiritual advisers among the Russian dissenters who do not recognize the clergy of the established church. Through the woman school teacher the Russian village girl now begins to learn in a wholesome way of the wide world outside, and with ambition and means she will evolve for herself a career full of interest and success. The future of the Slavic race is the present world problem. It is a problem that becomes more prominent with each decade. In the solution, whatever it may be, of that problem the women of Russia will be a factor of tremendous importance.

Chapter XIII

Women of Poland

XIII

WOMEN OF POLAND

In the great family of the Slavic races the Poles are preëminent by their ancient civilization, their genius, and their literary and artistic activity. Their ancient history, like that of most other nations, is lost in a confused mass of legends, but the rich treasures of their ancient popular songs reveal to us, largely, their old cultural status. Especially do many love and marriage songs of ancient origin and others preserved in Latin versions in old chronicles prove the conservatism of the mind of the Polish people and their conceptions of life. The maiden, now as in the olden days, sings before the all-important act of marriage: "Wreath, delicately bound of roses and white lilies intertwined, thou shalt for the last time adorn my anxious brow. Thou art the last of all garlands that I wound in the spring of maidenhood! By the side of the husband do I wander far away. Farewell to the mother's heart that bore me through bliss and pain. Might I repay all her toils with rich treasures. . . ." Adorned with the gaily colored bridal treasures or tinsel, she kneels to-day as of yore before her parents to receive their blessing. All the symbolic ceremonies betray an ancient origin.

Though legendary and mythical, Princess Wanda, daughter of Cracus (founder of the ancient capital

Cracow), symbolizes the virtues of Polish patriotism, chastity, and grace. She is the noblest type of Polish womanhood, and her memory lives on and on, in the soul of her race, as it were the personification of her sex Polonized. She had vowed eternal chastity, but a German war lord, Ritiger, inflamed by her beauty, waged war against her people to win her by force. Though the Poles were victorious, Wanda threw herself from the bridge of the castle on the Wawel mountain into the Vistula to save her country and her people from similar wars. Lyric and dramatic poetry, as well as the fine arts, music, painting, and sculpture, have glorified the self-sacrifice of the noble Polish princess at the legendary entrance of her race into history. Only the other great race of the western Slavic family, the Czechs, begins its history in like fashion with the beautiful and semi-divine form of Libussa.

With the reign of Mieczyslaw I. (962) Polish history begins. In 965, this prince adopted Christianity in order to win the hand of Dombrowka, daughter of king Boleslaw of Bohemia, and thus to consolidate the two great western Slavic races against the ever-increasing encroachments of the Germans. Roman Catholicism stands at the cradle of the Poles, thus placing them from the start in opposition to the eastern Slavs, foremost among whom are the Russians. After Dombrowka's death in 977, a German markgravine, Oda, shared the Polish throne.

Polish literature begins with a hymn to the Holy Virgin (Bogarodzica, Mother of God), the national protectress of the Poles, whose worship pervades their entire life, and whose sacred picture is the essential part of their national coat of arms of the white eagle and their national banner. This hymn is the Polish catechism; it accompanies the schoolboy and the warrior and, in fact, all classes and ages throughout life. This feminine romantic song and

the *Psalter of Queen Margaret* are the oldest monuments of Polish literature.

The later princes and kings of Poland, a dignity bestowed upon them by Otto II., Emperor of Germany, married, for dynastic reasons, Czech, Kief, and German princesses, who, it is true, did not further Polish national life, but broadened Polish culture by contact with other nations. Wladislaw Lokietek (the Short), who about 1312 made Cracow the centre of Poland, being the first monarch crowned there, married Jadwiga, daughter of Boleslaw, Prince of Kalisz. She was an eminent woman, and was buried in the magnificent cathedral at Cracow, where her granite monument still stands.

The early kings favored the common people, who, unfortunately, in later centuries were reduced to servitude, against the *szlachta* (*Geschlecht,* nobility), so that in early days the women of the people (*naród*) attained a high social standard. Especially Casimir the Great, "the king of the peasants," and of the oppressed generally, greatly increased the happiness and prosperity of the nation. He even admitted to his realm the persecuted Jews by virtue of the statute of 1357 (*privilegia Judæorum*), a favor which, according to an unauthenticated tradition, was due to his love for a beautiful Jewess Esterka (Esther). This great king was legally married three times. He was unhappy in his marriage with Anna Aldona, a Lithuanian princess, a union which remained, however, without political consequences. Anna never felt at home in Poland; she clung to Lithuanian customs, music, and dance. She loved the manly sports of horseback riding and hunting, and during her indulgence in them she was accompanied by Lithuanian flute players. Her Christianity appeared at all times rather doubtful in the eyes of the Polish clergy, and the Church pomp and ceremony were to her very distasteful.

Her husband, to whom she was married almost in his boyhood, led a very licentious life. Theodor Schiemann, the historian of the Slavs, relates how Casimir at the court of Budapesth fell in love with Clara von Zach, daughter of a court official. Casimir's sister, Queen Elizabeth of Hungary, aided him in seducing the innocent maiden. The father of the latter, maddened by the disgrace, broke into the royal hall to avenge himself upon the betrayers of his child, and wounded the royal couple, but he was finally slain. A terrible judgment was passed upon all the members of the family of Zach: Clara herself was mutilated and chased, as a beast might be, to death, but her royal seducer did not interpose a barrier to her punishment. This event throws a lurid light on the mediæval court life in Hungary and Poland.

After the death of Lithuanian Anna, Casimir betrothed himself to Margareth of Bavaria, who is said to have died of grief at the approaching marriage to the hated Polish king. His next wife, Adelheid of Hesse, was neglected and ill treated, and when the king married another woman, Christina Rokiczan, she left Poland forever. Christina shared the fate of her predecessor, and the king married in 1365 Hedwig, Duchess of Sagan, during the lifetime of his undivorced wife Adelheid. The Pope, however, who had at first called that marriage "a public disgrace," granted him a divorce from his former wife to legitimatize the new union. We may draw interesting comparisons between that otherwise great and tolerant but morally depraved Polish king and Henry VIII. of England.

The first great Polish woman in the glowing light of history is Jadwiga, daughter of King Louis of Hungary and Poland, the legitimate queen of Poland in default of a male heir, crowned on October 15, 1384, in the Cathedral of Cracow. Betrothed in her childhood to an Austrian prince,

who now came to Cracow and quickly won her heart and actually consummated the marriage, she was nevertheless compelled by the Polish nobles, who hated the German and forced him to flee for his life, to accept Jagiello, the supreme duke of the Lithuanians, a still barbarous, pagan people, but whose power extended down to Kief. This union was a political stroke of the first magnitude. Jagiello and the Lithuanians became Christianized in the Latin form, the united countries became the greatest power in eastern Europe, and therewith the overwhelming might of the Teutonic Order was broken forever. The dynasty of the Jagiellos was founded and reigned supreme in Poland for two hundred years (1386–1572). When Jadwiga, a great queen and woman, died in 1399, the Poles, otherwise unruly, retained as their ruler King Wladislaw Jagiello, who from a great but savage pagan had become a good Christian and a strong statesman. The destruction of the Teutonic Order in the battle of Tannenberg, 1410, one of the greatest and most decisive battles in history, insured for centuries the hegemony of Poland in eastern Europe. Of this battle we have an interesting letter from Jagiello to Anna, his second wife, whom he addressed from the camp on the battlefield as "noble princess, illustrious and dear consort": "We slew numberless enemies, not through the strength of Our arm, or the multitude of Our warriors, but solely with the aid of Our Lord, who may further us in power and virtue!" This document not only shows Jagiello's adherence to Christianity, but also proves the respect paid to a Polish queen, even though she was inferior to Jadwiga, who was the reorganizer and refounder not only of a mighty realm, but also of the famous old University of Cracow, which before her time had sunk into complete insignificance. She had obtained in 1397 a papal bull for the foundation of a theological faculty,

and insured the existence of the university for the future by rich legacies bequeathed on her deathbed.

One century and a half later a royal romance with a tragic ending was enacted in Poland. King Sigismund (Augustus) II. (1547–1572), on the death of his first wife Elizabeth, daughter of Emperor Ferdinand I., married secretly Barbara Radziwil, of the most illustrious Lithuanian family. On his accession to the throne he avowed his marriage, and the princess accompanied him to Cracow to attend the funeral of his father. The diet of Piotrkow believing a union with a foreign princess more profitable to Poland, demanded the annulment of his marriage with Barbara, but the king resisted, and saw her crowned as his queen in 1550. Six months after her coronation, however, she died suddenly, probably poisoned by her mother-in-law, the hated Italian, Bona Sforza, who as queen had exercised a baneful influence upon Polish life. The unfortunate Queen Barbara is idealized in Polish lays, and the portraits preserved of her show beauty of form and features.

It may be interesting to note the relation of the great Polish king Jan Sobieski (1674–1696), the liberator of Vienna, and in truth of Europe, from the Turkish conquerors, to his wife, who exercised an almost complete dominion over him. We have an admirable description of the Polish court at the time of Sobieski; of his extraordinary wife and daughter, and of social affairs there, in a report by a contemporary, an anonymous French abbé, whose manuscript was found in the Bibliothèque Mazarin, in Paris, and was published for the first time in 1858. He describes the Polish nobility as turbulent in the Diet and at home, tells of their luxury and their habits, the high esteem in which ladies of high birth were held, and the scandalous treatment of peasant women, as well as the

absolute power of the *szlachta* over the life and honor of the serfs and their women.

Sobieski's wife was a French woman, but she became completely Polonized: Marie Casimire d'Arquien, originally maid of honor of Marie Louise, wife of Wladislaw and of his brother Casimir successively, had been married first to the Polish magnate Zamoiski, and after his death to Sobieski. She is said to have induced her royal consort to assist Austria against the Turks, very much against the wishes of Louis XIV. of France, who desired the power of Austria to be broken forever. The King of France had incurred her ill will by refusing to elevate her father to the rank of a duke. The queen had the strongest Polish interests and sympathies; the letters of Sobieski to her are all in Polish; they are of the greatest historical value, as the king informs her constantly of his progress; also the personal element in them is highly interesting; they abound in words of endearment: "My charming and incomparable Mariette." "Only joy of my soul." The queen, though beautiful and passionately loved by Sobieski, was an avaricious, despotic, jealous, revengeful woman. After the death of the great king she lived in Italy and France, and died in 1716 in the castle of Blois which Louis XIV. had given to her. Her remains rest with those of Sobieski in the Cathedral of Cracow.

The description of the decline of Poland under the Saxon kings, of the political and moral decay of the country under foreign rulers, does not belong to our theme, since the national element in the social life of the unfortunate country is wanting.

If so much attention has heretofore been given to royal women, it was done in the conviction that, since, after all, the history of culture is a comparatively modern branch of scholarship, national life in periods not too clearly defined

in history is best depicted in the highest circles, which, for good or for evil, will ever serve as a model or a type to be imitated by the classes below. We need only to glance at the life of fashion, so essential to women in all stages of society, to realize the truth of this conclusion.

In spite of all class distinctions, which were stronger in Poland than in any other country of western civilization, the Polish type of womanhood was nevertheless more recognizable throughout all the classes than anywhere else. In spite of all their modesty and womanly beauty, Polish women were at all times political enthusiasts; at all epochs we find among them commanding natures, resolute and manly patriots. Patriotic motives governed their loves, their marriages, their motherhood, and at no time more than since the partition of their beloved country. They excel in hospitality, which is their particular *métier*, and upon which they lavish, almost frivolously, their earthly goods. Courage, bravery, even heroism, are common traits, and are presupposed in their men as prerequisites to winning female affections. Ideals prevailed at all times; and for ideals, often very empty and unstatesmanlike, they sacrificed themselves, and also the life blood of their men, nay, their commonwealth, in fatal contrast to the self-interested, cool-headed, and cold-hearted statesmanship of their well-disciplined German neighbors. Upon this noble, but unpractical, national characteristic is to be based also their lack of an economic sense; work as such for material reward was always, it may be said, despised by Polish women; money was, and is, considered a sordid means for a purpose; and the same training, inculcated into the souls of the sons of Polish women, was one of the chief reasons for the political downfall of the nation. A too highly developed sense of individual liberty, the pursuit of ideals, impracticable even for their own people, and

a contempt for everyday work and commonplace activity, have destroyed Poland. The eminent Danish literary historian Georg Brandes, in his *Poland,* reports characteristically this significant remark by a distinguished Polish lady: "What company they invited me to meet! It was made up of workmen, advocates whom we pay, manufacturers who sell goods, doctors into whose hands three rubles are slipped for a visit."

It is true that it was not always thus with Polish women, and certainly not with those of the poorer classes. In early times the education of woman consisted in prayer and work. Learning was not a womanly requisite; the domestic and agricultural work in the fields belonged to women, while the tavern was too frequently the abode of the man (*chlop*). Piety is a most genuine reality with Polish women; they were at all times a rock of the Catholic Church. Chastity was the most common virtue, and was strictly enforced. Nitschmann, the German historian of Polish literature, mentions the fact that as late as A. D. 1645, a young gentlewoman at the Polish court, who had entertained improper relations with several courtiers, was condemned to death, together with her lovers. Strict discipline went so far that, according to old Polish custom, maidens were chastised with rods every Friday to remind them of Christ's sufferings and to bring them nearer to God. The prayer of innocent children was reputed more effective, which was a strong incentive for young women to keep themselves pure as long as possible. No wonder that such women attained, in the course of time, a moral supremacy over their men, and that nowhere in Europe such a genuine deference was offered to women as in Poland. The almost supreme rule of the Polish mother over her sons is proverbial. With all her tenderness for her children, it is the Polish mother who drove the youth of the

land to an almost hopeless struggle against the foreign conqueror, and to death on the altar of the fatherland. Nowhere has the Spartan mother's "Either *with* the shield or *upon* the shield" become such an often repeated reality as in the Polish insurrections against Russia.

Until the entrance of French fashions,—which, however, especially influenced the higher classes,—the costume of Polish women of all classes was national, beautiful, and many-colored. A cap of fine linen and a diadem were worn; the neck was left uncovered, as with the Polish men, and was adorned with strings of beads or jewels; rich furs ornamented the edges of their garments. The unmarried women wore fine silken or linen aprons, which are even to-day an indispensable part of the costume of Polish peasant girls at their social functions, for example, dances and spinning parties. A gaily colored cloth, artistically wound around the head, was always worn by the Polish girl of the lower classes; a white veil, which, however, must not cover the face, as with Mohammedan women, covered the heads of the maidens of the higher classes. Since the partition of Poland the gay national costume of the Poles is prohibited in Russia, but it is still worn, especially on festal occasions in Austria and Prussia.

The charm and beauty of Polish women is the constant theme of the national poets. A lyric poet of the seventeenth century, Morsztyn, sings of the Polish virgin:

"Thou model mine, divine in all thy beauty,
Compared with whom spring's roses even languish,
O brightest star, produced on earthly meadows,
Yet unsurpassed by heaven's luminaries!

"Pure spirit, encompassed in crystal,
From which thou shinest in lofty light of virtue;—
Perfected creature by the hand of God,
My spirit's comfort and my heart's delight!"

(H. S.)

If during the more ancient epochs there are recorded no Polish women who have made a mark in literary pursuits, this is not due to any intellectual deficit in those otherwise brilliant and gifted representatives of the fair sex, but to prevailing conditions, which did not permit them to turn from the maidenly or housewifely occupations, for—

"Woman's virtue never gets along
With novel-reading, sport, and song."

According to the Polish idea, man belongs on the horse, woman to the hearth; in which respect the otherwise antagonistic Germans and Poles do not differ essentially, if we may accept Emperor William's formulated four K's: *Kirche* (church), *Küche* (kitchen), *Kinder* (children), *Kleider* (clothing), as typical of German ideals.

Nevertheless, there were not wanting intellectual women who contributed to the brilliancy of the Polish genius during the golden era of their nation's literature. It touches us strangely when the great Polish poet Kochanowski sings in the elegies upon the death of his little daughter Ursula, in 1580:

"Thou, Slavie Sappho, singer young and sweet,
The heiress of my poetry shouldst thou be;
This was my hope in cheerful mood,
When lovely songs welled from thy angel lips,
Unconscious to thyself, yet sweet to me. . . .
Alas! too early silent, didst thou part,
Snatched forth by death, beloved poetess! . .
Not even death sealed thy poetic lips,
That, full of woe, spoke with heart-breaking kiss:
'No longer can I, mother, serve thee now;
My place near by thy side will be no more;
The honor of the keyboard will not fall to me;
O Loved ones, far from you must I depart.'
Thus didst thou speak, and more, angel of death,
Which I forgot in bitter parting's woe."

(H. S.)

The first great Polish poetess who created her title of nobility by her own talent in the dreariest time of Polish literature was Elizabeth Druźbacka, *née* Kowalska. Born in 1687, in Great Poland, she passed her youth under the care of the cultured Panna Sieniawska, Châtelaine of Cracow, married the treasurer Druźbacki, and, as a widow, retired to the cloister of Tarnów, where she died in 1760. Though unacquainted with foreign languages, and therefore with foreign literatures, she drew her inspiration from her own poetic soul and rose high above the level of her poetic contemporaries prophesying a renascence of Polish literature. Her poetic works, published by Joseph Zaluski,—the famous historian and bibliographer, and later Bishop of Kief,—and republished several times since, show much poetic beauty and graceful originality of composition, though the material itself betrays sometimes the undeveloped taste of the time: she apostrophizes the elemental forces in her poem *Water, Fire, and Air;* she describes in inspired words the life of King David; the four seasons; she writes allegorically of the fortress built by God, locked with five gates (the soul of man, with its five senses); she sings praises of the forests, so dear to the Pole and to the Germans:

> "The dense and shady forests glow in richest colors:
> White is the birch tree, tender green its branches:
> The beech tree proud shines in its youthful fulness;
> The noble fir spreads green its lofty branches;
> Centuries' strength sleeps in the iron oak tree."
>
> (H. S.)

Toward the end of the eighteenth century occurred the great and terrible events which, culminating in the tripartitionment of Poland, accomplished its political destruction as an independent commonwealth. This important event revolutionized the life, thought and aspirations of Polish women, suddenly expanded the horizon of their

political ideas, and stirred them up to an understanding of the earnestness of national existence or national annihilation. These influences are constant, and ceaselessly interfere with the life of Polish womanhood, either encouraging them to great efforts or driving them to despair or denationalization. That great calamity, according to J. Moszczeńska in Helene Lange's *Handbook of the Woman's Movement,* forced the Polish woman to take a deeper interest in the condition of her country and her own position, and impelled her to stand by the Polish man as companion of his misfortune, his exile, his solitude in foreign lands.

When speaking of the unfortunate political situation of Polish women, we must, however, in justice exclude their sisters in Austrian Poland, to whom perfect freedom and national self-development are permitted; for a free and untrammelled national existence is in every respect vouchsafed to that part of Poland which fell to Austria, namely, Galicia and Lodomeria, with the capitals of Cracow and Lemberg.

When Poland had actually fallen, the leading patriots began to realize the sins and follies which had eaten so much of the marrow of the great nation with the glorious past, and which had allowed their country to fall an easy prey to the disciplined and superior power of three mighty neighbors. Superior Polish women began to aid strongly the patriots in revivifying the slumbering forces of the masses of the lowly people who had so long been kept in servitude, prevented from participating in the national progress, and deprived of education and incentives to patriotism, the lack of which latter in the common people had been so bitterly avenged on the entire nation. Princess Czartoryska, of the illustrious house of Polish magnates, undertook to diffuse a universal culture and national consciousness among the people. By far superior to her, however, was

Klementyna Tańska, born in 1798 in Warsaw, who, in her Gallicized country, did not at first even learn her national language, but had to make herself familiar with it through study. In 1824 she began her literary activity, and strongly influenced ethically and nationally the society of her time, especially the women and the newly rising generation. This activity was intensified when, in 1827, she became superintendent of all the girls' schools in Warsaw. Married at the age of thirty to the historian Hoffmann, she left Poland and died in France in 1845. Her writings are of classical purity; and her services to the Polish language, which in its present literary worth and linguistic form is equal to any in existence, cannot be overestimated. Her historical portraits of the glorious past of her nation and of its great literary luminaries exercised a powerful influence upon the education of the young Poles, inasmuch as she vivified old Polish tradition and history. Her *Jan Kochanowski at Czarnolas* reveals the golden era of Polish literature: its environment, its great personalities of both sexes, the old Polish virtues and qualities which made the nation powerful, the commonwealth strong and prosperous. In short, this great Polish woman strove to raise her sisters to a higher plane of responsibility, of wifehood and of motherhood, in order to produce a new and better generation of men—of Polish men withal. She was an opponent to the virago type of advocates of the emancipation of women who desired to arrogate to themselves what is by natural laws the domain of man. But realizing that the political conditions might make fearful gaps in the ranks of Polish men, and that there might be hundreds of thousands of widows and orphans, she desired to open to women all possible avenues of independent life and work, and to set before them the ideal of toil—toil with the hands and toil with the head—as the one worthy

purpose of life. The works of this remarkable Polish author were edited in 1877, in twelve volumes, with an introduction, by another important Polish writer and extraordinary woman, Gabriele Narzyssa Zmichowska, who herself wrote admirable tales and a collection of charming lyric poems which reveal a lofty soul and a melancholy disposition.

Klementyna Tańska's fears of a depopulation of her beloved country became a reality by the revolution of 1831. Deaths on the battlefield, wholesale exiles to Siberia, political flight and emigration *en masse,* deprived Poland of numbers of her noblest sons. Those who remained behind were cowed, and reduced to servile obedience: no wonder that Poland's women lost much of their former admiration for, and dependence upon, the strong sex. They began to realize that they must become independent, and wage the campaign of nationalism for themselves, if the Polish language, literature, and genius were to be saved, or a regeneration of the aftergrowth was to be possible. The right of a higher, or rather of the highest education for woman was demanded, to enable her to participate effectively in the political problems of the nation, in the social questions and the welfare of the race, to free her from the shackles of conventionalism which had reduced woman well-nigh to the standard of a social toy or an adornment of the "salon."

Women were trained to work, to live up to the higher ideals of life and nationality, to subordinate the common petty interests to a higher, more universally human existence. A circle of superior women, the so-called enthusiasts, gathered around Gabriele Zmichowska, who worked for the rights of man, for the abolition of servitude, for the free development of the natural forces of their great race. The result was that Gabriele languished for two years in

the fortress of Lublin and the other prominent members of her circle were scattered by persecution. But Polish women thus attained their revolutionary citizenship, and, confessedly or not, they belong to the irreconcilables in the political systems of Prussia and Russia, biding their time, knowing well that an open resistance, instead of the policy of passive and latent opposition, would be both unwise and untimely.

Sociological questions have become prominent in denationalized Poland, and Polish women have been drawn into their discussion. The tariff barrier between Poland and Russia having been abolished, commerce and industry were turned into wider channels. The revolution of 1863, ill prepared and ill executed, failed utterly, and the only hope left for the nation was progress along economic lines. The great work of the czar-liberator, Alexander II., who released the Russian peasantry from servitude, also revolutionized the problems of economic sustenance in Poland: the struggle for existence under the changed conditions. Poland, placed as she is between Russia and her powerful western neighbors, quickly became an industrial centre. Polish women came forward with their legitimate claims to participate in this material movement. They had no easy victory. The Russian government, as such, excluded Polish women *ipso facto,* even more rigidly than Polish men. But the breadless women forced their way into the factories, the offices, and the workshops, *i.e.*, into commerce and industry. Finally, even the state recognized their punctuality, conscientiousness, and frugality, and all this with consequent cheaper wages, and received them in the postal, the telegraph, and even in the railway service, and as clerks in the courts.

The teaching profession is still most sought by women, though instruction, in all the schools, is almost entirely in

Russian, or other modern languages, Polish being excluded. The demand for university education, though granted to women in theory, is not so in practice. It is very much restricted, as the University of Warsaw does not admit women, though the stirring events after the Japanese war, the constitutional conflict throughout Russia, and the struggle for autonomy in Poland may change all this in the near future. The Austro-Polish universities of Cracow and Lemberg have recently opened their doors to them, a fact which drew the many earnest and studious Russian-Polish women to those centres of learning, as they had previously been attracted by the liberality of the Swiss universities and the University of Paris. As Cracow and Lemberg admit only women who have obtained the certificate testifying to proficiency for university studies, thus placing them on a level with the male students, gymnasia for women have been established in Cracow, Lemberg, and Przemyśl. This academic movement is powerfully seconded by the literary, social, and political clubs of Polish women. These contribute much to the intellectual activity of the nation, if such the Polish people can to-day be called, and they produce able and earnest women teachers, correspondents, editors of reviews, and authors.

Bismarck, the greatest German statesman that ever lived, and as such, naturally, the most unmitigated political enemy of the Polish race, which, in his mind, constituted a constant danger to the empire, expelled from Germany, in 1886, fifty thousand Poles of both sexes, not only foreign Poles, but even Germans who had married unnaturalized Polish women; for experience taught, he said, that such wives invariably make their husbands, and especially their children, Polish patriots. A higher testimony to their pride and worth, though unconsciously given, could hardly be cited, for if any man ever understood what was needful

to Germany, it was Bismarck, the gigantic German statesman, who subordinated everything to German interests.

Polish women of the aristocracy are born to rule; their pride and self-esteem never forsake them, even in misery; and the women of the lower classes are ever faithful to the Roman Catholic Church, which with the downfall of Poland has lost one of its most precious domains. Polish women, then, carry the spark of a dangerous patriotism and the torch of a Church foreign to Prussia and Russia from generation to generation. *Virgo Maria, Regina Poloniæ,* is still protectress of the land. And the woman worship of the "Sarmats ruled by women," as Pliny has it, still remains; gallantry to their women is a trait ingrained in Polish men; the word "for a lady" has still a magic charm. Their beauty, the proverbial perfection of their hands, and the smallness of their feet, do the rest in the subjection of men.

Georg Brandes, the aforementioned sharp observer, rightly calls Polish women of rank patriarchal and active only on their country estates, while at Warsaw they appear immersed in social duties; but this is only a guise under which they promote the cause of their country in every enterprise, be it the founding of a library, a hospital, or a sewing school. Every member of a social, charitable, or economic institute is also a member of the great army for the future redemption of their beloved country. The Polish language being forbidden in the schools, every noble Polish woman becomes a schoolmistress of her language at home, not only for her children, but also for her servants and those who are drawn under her sway. Polish women of the higher class once had the reputation of being frivolous; if so, they have become chastened by the one absorbing idea of patriotism and the restoration of Poland. They are elegant *grandes dames* in a higher degree than

German ladies of their class with their substantial virtues, and more self-controlled and faithful than their French sisters, though their hearts and heads are surely not colder. Of course, woman's nature is as complex and as unclassifiable in Poland as elsewhere, and generalization will therefore always remain onesided; but the Polish type of womanhood is unmistakable; so is the preponderance of the feminine element over the masculine. Brandes is quite right when he quotes the opinion of an Italian author: "Among Germanic races the men are more gifted than the women; among the Latin races they stand on the same level; among the Poles, the most characteristic Slavic race, woman is decidedly superior to man as to intellectual qualities, passion, courage, wit, patriotism. Polish history is pervaded—as with a red thread—with heroic deeds of women. They have aroused whole districts to rebellion against foreign oppressors, fought in battles, endured the hardships of camp and march, and died on the battlefield." We need only read Henryk Sienkiewicz's novels to find such real types of Polish women-heroes in all the domains of warlike and political activity. The rebellions of 1830–1831 and 1863 found female warriors, as real combatants, in every Polish detachment.

The Polish noblewoman Emilia Plater, sung in Mickiewicz's brilliant pæan, *The Colonel's Death,* raised a detachment of patriots, fought in many battles, tried to break with the sword the iron girdle of the enemies surrounding her corps, and finally died in a forest cabin, in December, 1831, of her wounds and from fatigue and hunger. The female martyrs who have followed voluntarily their exiled husbands or fathers to Siberia may be counted by thousands. No wonder that the Poles love their women with extraordinary tenderness and gladly concede to them the palm of superiority!

It must be confessed, however, that conditions are quite the reverse in many places among the lower and lowest classes. The police system, and the exceedingly faulty and incomplete system of education, which seems consciously to be bent upon stupefying the lower strata of Polish society, has destroyed the force of Polish religion, language, and national characteristics, and has reduced thousands of Poles to the lowest social level. Much drunkenness prevails among the men, and consequently much brutal treatment of the women. Coarse vulgarity is heard in the *karczmas* (taverns) at dances and carousals. It is an ancient experience in history that an attempt at a violent denationalization of a race always produces a deterioration of the masses, while, on the other hand, the highest elements are steeled and tested as by fire.

Several eminent women shine as luminaries on the Polish Parnassus. Maria Ilnicka, born in 1830, excels as an admirable translator of the songs of Ossian and of Walter Scott, and as a creator of profoundly thoughtful poems. Deotyma-Jadwiga Luszczewska, the talented Polish improviser and poetess, published in 1854 and 1858 two volumes of exquisite poetry, and later an epic, *Tomyra,* the rhapsody *Stanislaw Lubomirski,* and a brilliant *Symphony of Life* for the Beethoven festival in the great theatre at Warsaw in 1870. Her fine creation, *Poland in Song,* published in 1887, treats of the Wanda legend in dramatic form.

Omitting a large galaxy of lesser lights two women authors reign supreme in Poland: Elise Orzeszko and Marja Konopnicka. The former, born in 1842, though too passionate in her plea for her ideals, especially for the absolute emancipation of woman, whom she believes is superior to the deceiver and cynic man, is a deeply poetic nature. Her novels and social-philosophical works have

been, in later years, realistic and true to nature, and are permeated with a humanitarian sympathy for the oppressed, be they Poles or Jews or women. Her novels *Eli Makower* (1874) and *Meir Esofowicz* (1878) treat of the relation of the Jews to the Polish nobility, and again of the contrast and warfare between the Talmudic fanatics and the tolerant, cosmopolitan, cultured Jews of the world. She prophesies to the homeless race a better future. Her brilliant literary works and her endeavors to inculcate on her people Polish ideals did not always find friendly appreciation on the part of the Russian government, which confined her for several years to Grodno. Her plea for the emancipation of woman found a strong antagonist in Eleonore Ziemiecka (1869), who declared that the unlimited emancipation of women is but a dream of unhappy and oppressed women, which, if realized, would lead society to destruction. Ziemiecka insists that in any sound society the natural mission of woman is that of a wife and mother, and as the counsellor of man.

Marja Konopnicka is a lyric or rather elegiac poet of great power and genius. Her poetry is not soothing and comforting, but painful, pessimistic, and despairing. Freedom of thought, sometimes verging on atheism, is the inspiration which she drew from the condition of her country and of her people. She is the singer of despair; according to her conception of the world, God has lost his fatherly feeling for the world, or perhaps for Poland only:

> "The thundercloud is thy crown, lightning thy garment,
> The sun the stool of thy mighty feet.
> What are human tears to thee? Dewdrops!
> And yet omniscient, none is shed without thy will!
> Indeed! And yet thou hast never dried them?" (H. S.)

Not to end with a misconception of this poet's nature, let it be mentioned that love is not strange to her; but it

is the love for her native land, and for all those who in some way glorify her native land. Such love she breathes in her ode to the great Polish painter Matejko, when she writes of his great pictorial apostrophe to the glory of Poland, *The Battle of Grünwald,* as Zaleski, also, eulogizes Matejko, "who with the magic staff of the brush resuscitates Poland."

Though dramatic art is not the forte of the Polish race, the theatre has produced some great actresses, chief among whom are Helen Marcello and Wisnoska, who found such a tragic death at the hands of a jealous Russian officer; Madame Popiel Svienska; and, greatest of all, Madame Modrzejewska (Modjeska), whom Brandes calls a wonder of the nation. Unfortunately, the range of Polish dramatic poetry and the despotically ruled theatre at Warsaw could not satisfy Modjeska's genius. Her repertoire is drawn mostly from the creations of Shakespeare and Schiller; and with her art she has fascinated until her old age—she is now about sixty-three—vast audiences in the capitals of almost all the European states and in the United States, and vivified the noblest creations of the greatest thinkers and poets.

We are forced to treat superficially so great a theme, for the women of Poland crowd the history of their country, especially since its fall. We cannot give the gallery of eminent Polish women, for this task belongs to the painter and to the historian of Polish literature and culture. But whenever a great man came under a Polish woman's spell, he succumbed to it: Napoleon the Great for once became a romantic lover under the influence of the beautiful Countess Walewska; the first German emperor felt his heart bleed when dynastic reasons forced him to give up a union with Countess Radziwil; Goethe grows enthusiastic, at the age of eighty, when in August, 1829,

the great Adam Mickiewicz and his friend Odyniec presented themselves at Weimar, introduced by Madam Szymanowska, a great court pianist at Saint Petersburg; he exclaims spontaneously: "How charming she is, how beautiful and graceful!" The Polish poet's loves, adduced by Brandes, are different from all the others: they are ardent and wild, but never sensual; they are repressed or chastened by the constant emotions of sorrow for their country, their own condition, the desperate future. So are also their poetic creations: Polish women are either heroic amazons struggling for the holy cause of the fatherland (*ojczyzna*), or they are angelic beings belonging to another world. Nor is the motherhood of a Polish woman sweet or idyllic; the same pain prevails in bearing a Polish son whose future fate is the sorrow of "the man who lost his fatherland." Mickiewicz strikes the real chord of this sentiment in the celebrated ode *To the Polish Mother:* "Take thy son in time into a solitary cave, teach him to sleep on rushes, to breathe the damp and vitiated air, and to share his couch with poisonous vermin. There he will learn to make his wrath subterranean, his thought unfathomable, and quietly to poison his words, and give his being the humble aspect of the serpent. Our Redeemer, as a child, played in Nazareth with the cross on which He saved the world. O Polish mother! In thy place, I would give to thy son the toys of his future to play with. Give him early chains on his hands, accustom him to push the convict's dirty wheelbarrow, so that he shall not grow pale before the executioner's axe, nor blush at the sight of the halter. For he will not go on a crusade to Jerusalem, like the olden knights, and plant his banner in the conquered city, nor will he, like the soldier of the tricolor, be able to plough the field of freedom and water it with his blood! No! an unknown spy will accuse him; he must defend

himself before a perjured court; his battlefield will be a dungeon underground, and an all-powerful enemy his judge. The blasted wood of the gallows will be the monument of his grave; a few woman's tears, soon dried, and the long talks of his countrymen in the night-time will be his sole honor and memorial after death."—(Transl. Brandes, *Poland.*)

Such is the character of Polish womanhood, in reality and in poetic fiction. Inexhaustible riches dwell in its type. The sins of past centuries have been avenged bitterly upon them and their children; but they live on, true to their Polish nature. The variety of the human races, created by Divine Providence, with all their manifold peculiarities, their virtues and faults, would suffer greatly, and the human family would be seriously impoverished, should the species "Polish Woman" ever be merged in the conquering nations and vanish with them, however great and nobly endowed the latter may be. If the realization of this wish be the hope of statesmen, the historian of culture can only desire that the race remain—according to a Tacitean word regarding the Teuton—"similar only to itself."

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